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The primary purpose of this book is to present the critical issues in pupil transportation that will confront pupil transportation supervisors in local school districts. The following issues are discussed: (1) demands for extended service from community pressure groups; (2) reductions in budget requests by governing bodies; (3) unrest among driver personnel; (4) declines in the purchasing power of tax dollars; (5) rapid turnover among school bus drivers; (6) increases in the number of on-board disciplinary problems; (7) the National Safety Program Standard 17; (8) school bus accident reports; (9) transporting the handicapped child; and (10) evaluation of the seat belt issue. Appended are the preservice training program, pupil bus behavior report form, daily pretrip inspection form, uniform school bus accident report form, school bus rider's guide, school bus driver application form, and a physical examination of driver form. (SI)

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Preface

The primary purpose of writing this book has been to present, in a factual and realistic manner, critical issues in pupil transportation that will, at one time or another, confront pupil transportation supervisors in local school districts. True, much has been written in past years about the various aspects of the public school transportation program, but little of that writing has been directed to the one person that needs it the most—the person newly assigned the awesome task of transporting thousands of children on sometimes less than desirable equipment over treacherous roadways with an ever shrinking transportation budget.

Unfortunately, many transportation supervisors literally grow up on the job. Sometimes, they are promoted because of the potential they show rather than what they already know. Such employees are often thrown, unceremoniously, into a sea of frustration and struggle in a somewhat futile attempt to keep their heads above the water. This book will try to provide a source of information that will be of value to these inexperienced supervisors of pupil transportation. However, even experienced transportation supervisors and other school business officials may find the perspective it offers useful.

If it is instrumental in obtaining just one solution to a perplexing problem that would have been more difficult without it, then the time spent in its preparation and development will have been more than worth the effort. I would like to thank the Association of School Business Officials International for allowing me the opportunity to share my experiences with others. I would like to dedicate my efforts to T. Wesley Pickel who provided me with the opportunity to enjoy the professional experience of a lifetime.

This book was prepared in my private capacity, and no official support or endorsement of the Tennessee Department of Education is intended or should be inferred. Additional credit goes to the ASBO International Pupil Transportation Committee and Chairman Charles L. Wineland of Charles County Public Schools in LaPlata, Maryland, for providing guidance on this project.

Ernest Farmer
Director, Pupil Transportation
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Introduction

Local school boards are confronted with a number of issues in public education. None of the issues they face is more challenging, however, than those encountered in the area of pupil transportation. Demands for extended service from community pressure groups, reductions in budget requests by governing bodies, repeated instances of unrest among driver personnel, noticeable declines in the purchasing power of tax dollars, rapid turnovers among school bus drivers and disturbing increases in the number of on-board disciplinary problems represent areas of concern that must be resolved.

Reductions in Proposed Budgets

Adequate funding and responsible management are vital to the success of any pupil transportation program. The reluctance of governing bodies to fund projected programs in an acceptable manner is frequently justified by charges that the school board cannot document and justify its program needs. Such accusations are often unfounded and sometimes result from an inability to understand budget documents.

Since school boards and other governing bodies exist to meet the needs of their citizens, they should make every effort to avoid impasses. Refusals to fund responsible budgets, or to effect realistic compromises when such impasses occur, should not be tolerated by the public.

Responsible actions are the logical aftermath of meaningful communications. Friction between competing governmental agencies can be expected with increasing frequency until all communicative channels are open. Such communicative efforts should not be limited to the budget document but should be expanded to include a full understanding of the functions of both agencies and the limitations associated with each. The governing body must understand that its authority to approve the school budget does not necessarily include the authority to effect changes in its line item entries. That authority is an exclusive right of the board and, as such, cannot be usurped any more than the school board can change the tax rate set by the governing body. The funding agency that understands its authority and acts within that authority is not likely to become involved in conflicts with the board of education.

Reduction in the Purchasing Power of Tax Dollars

School districts have always been concerned with the shrinking value of tax dollars. This concern, however, has taken on new dimensions in recent years. During the last decade, the cost of gasoline has increased by more than 300 percent per gallon, repair parts by as much as 135 percent above allowable discounts, driver salaries by more than 100 percent, school buses by approximately 100 percent and insurance premiums by 65 percent in rural districts and up to 100 percent or more in many urban districts.

Such increases in costs have had a devastating effect on service. Many districts have been forced to retain equipment beyond tried and proven replacement policies. Others have sought legislative assistance in obtaining improved levels of state funding. Still others have reduced the size of their school bus fleets in an effort to escape the rising costs associated with the maintenance of obsolete equipment. Some school boards facing these problems have been forced to ask for additional funding in order to complete the school year.

Demands from Community Pressure Groups

Community involvement is welcome when it contributes to the success of a program. Fortunately, most community groups take positions that are instrumental in upgrading the quality of programs and services. Parent groups and other community organizations have frequently supported bond issues for pupil transportation equipment, worked to obtain improvements in driver salaries and promoted efforts to protect pupil passengers from such hazards as poorly maintained roadways and unprotected railroad crossings. Such support is priceless and most school boards are quick to acknowledge it.

Other community action groups sometimes take positions that are not in the best interest of the school district's programs. Such groups are often able to offset any lack in organizational structure with a strong emphasis on emotionalism and through a display of sheer determination. For example, a group may form quickly after the results of a transportation survey are released. Changes in the time of morning pick-ups and evening deliveries, reassignment of drivers and the elimination of unjustifiable service on hazardous side roads are typical of the decisions that may lead such community groups to protest school board actions.

Driver Unrest

Many school boards are experiencing difficulty in obtaining the services of fully qualified school bus drivers. School officials in some districts are even experiencing difficulty in finding any kind of driver. Many of those that are employable require substantial inservice investments in staff time and

school funds. In addition, competition from other industries sometimes results in more lax screening procedures.

The extent of driver unrest varies from school district to school district. Most districts, for example, have their share of dedicated school bus drivers, but many of them also have a small nucleus that are not quite so dedicated. Such drivers sometimes look upon the job for the salary it provides rather than the opportunity for the contribution it permits. These drivers are frequently between jobs at the time of employment and, consequently, are more likely to press their demands for greater salary increases and fringe-type benefits than school districts are able to provide. Their performance may be less than satisfactory, their relationship with pupil passengers strained and their attitude a contributing factor in any unrest throughout the community. Their desires for continued employment often are more security-oriented than service-oriented; consequently, their presence in the school bus fleet may be a source of continued problems for the school administrator.

Rapid Turnover Among School Bus Drivers

Good school bus drivers are crucial to the success of any transportation service. For this reason, it is imperative that school boards make every effort to attract, employ and retain the best qualified drivers available. Driver sources, however, are so limited in some sections of the country that school officials find it extremely difficult to employ the type of driver needed to assure a maximum degree of safety for the transported child.

The decision to employ women in a role that was once exclusively limited to men has met with widespread support. School officials wasted little time in drafting the following reasons to support their decisions: first, women offered immediate relief from the rapid turnover experienced in the employment of men; second, women often have a better track record as disciplinarians; finally, women have proven to be equal to men in dependability and reliability and, more often than not, superior in driving skill.

The use of students as bus drivers is rapidly becoming a practice of the past, due to the pressure exerted by the National Transportation Safety Board which has called for an end to the practice. This change can be expected to create both budget-related and recruitment-oriented problems, but the leadership available in most states can provide needed assistance to local school districts as they prepare to deal with the problems that arise from this change in employment practices.

Increases in On-Board Disciplinary Problems

Pupil discipline is essential to pupil safety. A lack of discipline among transported pupils seriously impairs the safety of the pupil load. For this

reason, every effort must be exerted to control behavioral patterns. This, in essence, means that occasional offenders must be dealt with tactfully, chronic offenders must be handled firmly and habitual offenders must be suspended from riding privileges.

Disciplinary action resulting from behavioral infractions must be consistent with policy procedures that have been adopted and disseminated to both transported pupils and their parents. The old saying "a bad apple in the barrel can quickly ruin the rest if not removed" is equally as applicable in depicting what is likely to happen from the presence of a bad student in a load of good students. School officials must not hesitate to deal forcefully with misbehavior.

Seat Belts and Type I School Buses

Tragedies involving school buses are often followed by public outcries for the installation of seat belts. Such outcries sometimes come from persons with little knowledge and even less experience in seat belt usage, at least on school buses. Those advocating the installation of seat belts on *Type I* school buses (see definition in Chapter 6) are convinced that they are essential to pupil safety and that the costs associated with their installation and maintenance are negligible when offset by the greater safety afforded the transported child. Installation of seat belts is supported, in many instances, by organizations that are well-organized, informed and consequently, effective in promoting their cause.

Those opposed to the installation and use of seat belts in the Type I school bus are equally committed to advancing their cause. They attract support from an extremely broad segment of the populace. School bus manufacturers, many pupil transportation officials, state-level pupil transportation associations, various safety-oriented agencies and, in some cases, parent organizations have united in the fight against the use of seat belts in school buses.

Summary

Most of these issues cannot be resolved without substantial increases in program expenditures. Demands for extended program services from community pressure groups and requests for increases in salaries from bus drivers require sizeable sums of money. Eliminating on-board disciplinary problems, reducing the current drift toward financial conservatism by governing bodies and reversing the rate of turnover among driver personnel are equally demanding and even more difficult to achieve. No easy solutions exist, but a better understanding of these issues may facilitate a proper response to problems as they occur.

Chapter 1

Spending Tax Dollars Wisely

Spending tax dollars wisely in the area of pupil transportation constitutes one of the greatest and long-standing concerns of school administrators. This concern dates from the year transportation programs were first initiated; consequently, it is logical to conclude that if costs were a concern then, they are still a concern now and will likely continue to be a concern for many years to come.

Expenditures in the earliest years of transportation programs were extremely modest because of the type of equipment operated, the extent of service provided and the relatively low rate of compensation required. Wagons and teams, for example, were often obtained under terms that were very agreeable to school districts. Such equipment required little in the way of capital investment and even less in operating funds primarily because of the limited demand for service. Traditionally, most children lived within the shadows of their community school buildings. Even in those instances when transportation was necessary, costs were predictably minimal. Most mule team operators, fortunately, were more interested in getting their children to community schools and in cooperating with their neighbors than in contracting with the school district to provide a service for pay.

However, significant changes in society occurred, including school consolidation, which greatly accelerated the demand for pupil transportation. Consolidation, more than any one single factor, was responsible for the introduction of pupil transportation services which eventually became so widely acclaimed and so much a part of the public school program that it is still recognized as one of the very few important things in life that has not been replaced with an acceptable substitute.

With the growing need for pupil transportation in more and more communities, so, too, came the need to conserve taxpayer dollars. Man-

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agement practices, operational procedures and maintenance measures are among the areas where the greatest potential for savings exist.

Management Practices

All transportation programs and services should be governed by a set of written policies. Unfortunately, many school districts have not taken the time to draft such policies; consequently, their operational expenditures can sometimes reach unprecedented levels of extravagance unless emergency measures are instituted within a reasonable time period. The absence of written policies often contribute to excessive costs and ultimately to necessary reductions in services. Only the development of proven management practices provides school administrators with a uniform way to control excessive demands for service.

School officials are frequently besieged with demands that cannot be justified. In the absence of written policies, such requests are hard to resist, and often school officials end up yielding to such pressures and authorizing bus drivers to deviate from the main route for extremely short distances to serve pupils living on side roads. Such deviations come at great expense to taxpayers and at considerable inconvenience to on-board pupils. The hazards to transported pupils in such instances and the possibility of damage to the transporting unit make transportation for distances of less than one-half mile extremely difficult, if not impossible, to justify.

The same concerns exist about the practice of transporting pupils that live within sight of the school building. Some exceptions are justified, however, such as an instance where the flow of traffic is dangerous to pupil safety and health. A transportation manager is under no obligation, however, to provide service when adequate sidewalks are available and the walking distance is not greater than one-half mile for elementary school students or one mile for junior and senior high pupils.

Written policies provide a badly needed sense of direction for the personnel entrusted with the responsibility of administering a transportation program. A school board, then, that neglects this responsibility has no right to expect its transportation program to operate in an efficient and economical manner. Service without a clear cut line of authority is, more or less, relegated to a "hit or miss" role depending, of course, upon the ability of the school administrator. Some administrators are able to function successfully without the benefit of written policies; however, that is the exception rather than the rule.

The purchasing of supplies and equipment is also a management practice that requires the expertise of a professional. Purchasing practices that include competitive bidding and dealer discounts are highly desirable economy measures. Competitive bidding for school buses, insurance coverage and other major items permit school districts to stretch transporta-

tion dollars. However, purchases for repair parts and other items needed in limited quantities, often are less expensive when purchased from one regular dealer because of discounts which, frequently, amount to as much as 20 to 60 percent on selected items.

Selecting the proper purchasing procedure is essential to economical operations, but so are efforts to prevent the overstocking of parts. An over-supply of slow-moving parts, for example, is as bad as an under-supply of fast-moving parts. An investment in parts is of little value to the school district until the parts are needed for equipment repairs. The wise administrator will exercise the necessary precautions to keep such purchases to an absolute minimum and, in doing so, realize substantial savings in the school bus operation.

Staffing is another area in which good administrative and management practices can result in budget savings. Some administrators look upon the salary required to attract the right person to the job as a needless expenditure rather than an essential investment. They sometimes ignore the fact that the right person can, and often does, save the school district a far greater sum of money than the district pays in salary.

The maintenance of appropriate records and the preparation of applicable reports also figure prominently in the quest for greater savings. Detailed records on the costs associated with the transportation of students to selected activities, for example, could help determine whether to use district-owned equipment or contract for the use of commercial equipment for extended trips outside the school locale. District-employed drivers inexperienced in highway traffic patterns are more likely to be involved in accidents on such outings than commercial operators. One accident involving a district-owned bus could easily erase any savings generated by avoiding the use of outside contractors.

A review of vehicle maintenance records for past years could help assess equipment performance and determine the professionalism of driver personnel. Such records should contain entries on labor costs, parts installed, down time, defects corrected, rate of oil consumption and the general condition of each unit within the school bus fleet. Drivers, unfortunately, are sometimes responsible for many equipment malfunctions. For example, school bus garages are full of worn-out clutches, burned-up engines and broken springs traced to the practices of drivers that should have been terminated. Detailed records of such abuses will save the taxpayer money and improve the image of transportation services.

Operational Procedures

Certain operational procedures can make or break a pupil transportation program. Good drivers are essential to a successful pupil transportation program and a good administrator knows it. For this reason, the best

drivers are the ones that are interested and dedicated to the job, not only to take care of the children but also to care for the bus they are employed to operate.

A dedicated school bus driver can contribute to program savings in other ways. Early detection of minor deficiencies can prevent the later occurrence of major deficiencies and costly equipment repairs. Such deficiencies are frequently discovered during the pre-trip inspections that are performed before the morning and evening trips are made. A good driver accepts this responsibility as a challenge and promptly reports findings in writing to mechanics at the school bus repair facility. A driver interested enough to conduct these daily inspections is extremely valuable to the school district. School officials must intensify their efforts to attract and employ these dedicated drivers.

Finding qualified, dedicated drivers can be difficult because employees of this caliber are often able to obtain more money from other types of employment. School districts, however, can sometimes partially offset this disadvantage because they offer a benefit that other sources of employment cannot supply. They are lucky enough to have jobs working with children, which somehow, appeal to better drivers. These drivers' apparent willingness to put their love for children above their desire for money will always be an asset to the pupil transportation program. Even long-term drivers whose tenure means higher salaries are worth their extra cost.

Recruiting competent drivers is a never-ending process. Frequently, state-level criteria for drivers will hamper a district's recruitment efforts. However, certain requirements, such as the frequency of medical exams, the amount of previous experience or minimum/maximum age restrictions, are necessary.

Expenditures associated with the purchase and operation of the vehicle is another possible source of savings for the taxpayer. From a capital standpoint, the individual school bus is a multi-thousand dollar investment. During a bus' normal lifetime expectancy, expenditures required to keep it operational could amount to as much as its original cost and, in some instances, even more. This fact creates a need for even more accountability from school officials. Previous purchasing practices that have enjoyed strong community support may no longer be the most desirable means of obtaining pupil transportation equipment. Wise administrators and school boards will search constantly for ways to achieve a greater savings in the expenditure of public funds.

One method for saving money may be abandoning the ownership plan of operation. In the more populous industrial regions, service is frequently provided under contractual agreements with private individuals owning one or more vehicles or corporations with a large fleet of yellow buses. Even though the benefits of contracting are well-known, many districts fail to consider them. The privatization of pupil transportation service, then, is

desirable to the extent that it eliminates the need for large capital outlay investments, enables school boards to determine the cost of program service before the year begins and relieves the school district of the major responsibility for the supervision of driver personnel.

On the other hand, the contracting plan has at least two major drawbacks that cannot be ignored: the contractor must realize a "reasonable" profit after all expenses have been met and the district must be willing to relinquish much of its administrative control over the transporting unit. These disadvantages become advantages under the public ownership plan and are largely responsible for its success in the more rural-oriented states across the country.

Many states have provided assistance in improving the purchasing power of local tax dollars. Such efforts have been received with mixed and varied reactions. The general public, for the most part, has supported such state-level purchasing involvement and, in some instances, has been largely responsible for its development. Bus manufacturers, on the other hand, have sometimes resisted such efforts because of the restrictions such practices often impose on the sale of equipment.

Savings are also possible from an evaluation of certain operational procedures. For example, an evaluation of existing operations may show that the district could save money by owning its own equipment.

Another area that may need to be evaluated is the vehicle replacement policy. Some school districts have failed to provide for the replacement of equipment on a systematic basis and, in so doing have ended up operating equipment that becomes more expensive to maintain every year. School districts with the foresight to provide for the replacement of buses on a regularly scheduled basis come out dollars ahead in program costs and are better able to provide their transported pupils with safer equipment and more efficient and dependable transportation service.

Efficient use of equipment also can lower the cost of transportation services. Effective school administrators will take immediate action to eliminate unnecessary retraces, or backtracks, and instances of dual service except when necessary. Most school officials agree that the operation of two or more buses over the same stretch of road for the convenience of the driver, or an influential resident, is a costly practice that must be prohibited. Any such instances will add considerably to the overall cost of the program and detract from the quality of service provided. Perhaps, it is both fitting and proper to remind boards of education and school administrators with pupil transportation responsibilities that transportation service in general, as well as a bus route, in particular, is to be planned for the convenience and safety of the child and for no other purpose. Planning for any other reason is a waste of the taxpayers' money.

Another costly and dangerous operational practice is allowing buses to stop at every pupil's residence in congested areas. A carefully planned

grouping of pupils at bus stops is desirable. First, such a practice will expedite traffic. Second, fewer stops will eliminate the danger associated with stopping and starting the vehicle. Third, fewer stops will provide for less wear and tear on brakes and tires, as well as better gas mileage. Such decisions should be based on distances of no less than 600 feet in rural areas and 1,200 feet in urban areas with special care given to guard against the possibility of creating new hazards in the effort to eliminate others.

Employing drivers who live within a community to be served also provides school administrators with a way to reduce expenditures. For example, having a bus operated by a driver who lives five miles from the first pick-up can cost an extra $360 for a 180-day school year, based on 1,800 empty miles at an average of five miles per gallon and a gasoline cost of one dollar per gallon. While this extra cost may seem insignificant, when it is multiplied by fifty vehicles, it becomes $18,000 or approximately half the cost of a new 66-capacity conventional school bus.

Loading buses in excess of the rated seating capacity, although legally permissible in some states and possibly justifiable in others, is, nevertheless, another example of false economy. While such pupil loads may eliminate the need for a second trip or even the addition of another vehicle, it will eventually necessitate an earlier than usual vehicle retirement. The continued disregard for the gross axle weight rating (GAWR) and other structure factors, adds to vehicle depreciation and creates hidden costs rather than actual operational savings. For obvious reasons, excessive loads and other such abuses of equipment should be reduced to an absolute minimum or, better still, eliminated altogether.

Maintenance Measures

Equipment performance can have a significant effect on operational expenditures, and equipment performance is directly related to the quality and the type of maintenance available.

A program of preventive maintenance often makes a substantial impact. The success of the preventive maintenance program depends on appropriate staffing and adequate budgets. Qualified mechanics must be employed in sufficient numbers to provide the servicing needed when equipment is scheduled for the required bumper-to-bumper check-ups. A good rule of thumb is a mechanic-vehicle ratio of 1 to 15 in fleets with average condition equipment, 1 to 20 in fleets of relatively new equipment and 1 to 10 in fleets with buses that have been in service for an average of seven or more years.

The often-used method of repairing equipment only when specific problems occur or providing only for the simplest of maintenance is ineffective and generally a waste of the taxpayers' money. Such maintenance programs give little or no attention to the location and correction of

potential equipment malfunctions. Belts are seldom checked, wheels are not examined for leaking grease seals or worn brake linings, springs are not checked for broken leafs, king pins are not replaced until an accident occurs and other essential maintenance functions are ignored. Such programs provide little more than a change of oil, a grease job and the addition of water to the battery if such is needed. The only equipment repairs that take place are those required to put the vehicle back into service. Such maintenance concepts have no place in the school district determined to get the most in service for every tax dollar expended on equipment repairs.

Summary

School officials are obligated to get the most from every dollar expended. Budget requests that include money for wasteful practices can often create problems, both for the transportation program and for the administrator.

Management practices that emphasize written policies, adequate staffing, acceptable purchasing procedures and the keeping of proper records and reports create a favorable atmosphere and prevent problems. Adequate operational procedures are also equally as important. Using appropriate employment criteria for program personnel, developing equipment specifications, selecting the best ownership plan of operation, the routing of buses to attendance centers and the composition of pupil loads are a few of the most important aspects of good operational procedures. The maintenance of equipment and the implementation of acceptable maintenance procedures are also essential to a fiscally sound transportation program. Wise school officials should try to incorporate all these conservation measures into their pupil transportation programs.

Chapter 2

Dealing with Community Pressure Groups

Community pressure groups are as American as apple pie. They exist for as many reasons as there are causes to support. Some serve a worthwhile purpose; others, seemingly, serve no purpose at all. Generally speaking, they surface because of a questionable decision. Their quest for a favorable solution, understandably, becomes the basis for the resulting controversy. They can be supportive as well as disruptive but they are often perceived as negative because of their opposition to official school board actions. Pressure to change a board-approved bus route, for example, that meets with the approval of the majority must, of necessity, originate from within the membership of the minority. Such action must be considered a negative reaction since it does not support an obviously popular decision.

Pressure groups are always dedicated to a cause. This dedication may end with a simple victory or remain for later confrontations. Bus driver strikes, for example, usually end when the battle is won. Anti-consolidation groups, on the other hand, may continue the war for months after the battle is lost.

Factors Contributing to Pressure Group Activities

Numerous factors contribute to the development of community pressure groups. The more prominent generally result in community-wide involvement. Such action groups enhance their existence by making their leadership district-wide in scope. This practice tends to create the image that the group is representing the interests of citizens in all sections of the

district. If successful, it is able to achieve a cohesion, or unity in action, that will greatly improve its prospects for success.

Opposition to a district-wide survey of the pupil transportation program constitutes an excellent example of pressure group activities. The group's scope of involvement is district-wide, its purpose is to affect change on a district-wide basis and the results are often compromises developed out of near chaotic conditions. Such compromises are seldom in the best interest of the school district and almost always self-serving to the leadership.

Other district activities result in groups that are more localized. For example, the elimination of traditional door-to-door service, cutbacks on program personnel, assignment of vehicles in operation, disciplinary actions resulting from violations of board policy, disputes over salary considerations and a host of others too numerous to mention are typical of such actions.

Characteristics of Pressure Groups

Educators are quick to recognize the characteristics of pressure groups. They are either poorly organized or overly organized; well-informed or badly misinformed; remarkably dynamic or noticeably static; overly optimistic or decidedly pessimistic but, perhaps most characteristic of all, they are in support of something or in opposition to it.

Administrators that must deal with such groups should try to detect the possibilities for acceptable compromises and try to steer the group in that direction. Sometimes, holding onto some middle ground is better than having no ground at all.

Functions of Pressure Groups

The major function of a pressure group is to effect change. No aspect of the school program is immune from their efforts. Pupil transportation is especially vulnerable because of the public's dependence upon its benefits. Most parents, for example, can afford school lunches for their children but few can accept the cost for transporting them to school centers. For this reason, they view changes in school bus routes with much suspicion and often resist them vigorously with some success when they are deemed objectionable.

The same is true for zoning proposals, especially when adopted to regulate school center enrollments. Many school boards are aware of the potential for discord that follows such actions and stop short of dogmatic decisions. They zone instead for pupil transportation purposes which provides for greater flexibility in enrollment privileges. If parents want their children to attend a school center other than the one to which transporta-

tion is provided, they are privileged to transport them there at their expense. Attendance zoning is designed to control school center enrollments and, therefore, would not permit this option.

Despite the negative implications generally associated with pressure groups, many positive actions result from their efforts. Bond issues, curriculum changes and, yes, even tax increases are frequently saved from defeat by positive-oriented rather than negative-oriented actions. Staff decisions, policy development and justifiable reductions in service have also profited from the support of positive-oriented actions because they are often as vigorously supported as they are sometimes opposed.

Methods of Countering Pressure Group Tactics

School officials have been confronted with a variety of pressure group activities. Unfortunately, no two are likely to be resolved in the same manner because of wide variances in their complaints. Actions that worked effectively in one part of the district may be totally ineffective in another. Such differences are further compounded by the composition of the group membership. People in some districts are more passive than people in others.

Different problems require different approaches. School officials should take note of such differences and adjust their approaches accordingly. Driver-related problems, for example, are not resolved in the same manner as parental-related problems unless the problems are related to each other. Drivers are not likely to support parental opposition to corrective actions taken by fellow drivers against disobedient children. Parents, in much the same respect, are not likely to intercede in behalf of drivers objecting to school board action when the dispute does not directly affect the quality of service provided. Some parents will become involved, however, if a school board fails to initiate action against a driver that they consider to be unworthy of employment. At this point, drivers also often become involved because they know that yielding to pressure by the board will likely result in similar actions from other pressure groups against other drivers.

There is no *best* way to deal with all pressure groups since no two pressure groups are the same or concerned with the same problem. Some methods, however, that have been tried and tested by school officials with proven results include essential compromises, mutually agreed upon "cooling-off" periods and reaffirmations of school board decisions.

Essential Compromises

Frequently, school officials discover that both parties have exaggerated the facts. For example, a bus driver reports unacceptable behavior by a transported pupil to the school principal with the request that transportation

service be denied until the pupil is appropriately punished. A pupil, in turn, counters with the charge that the driver has been harassing him since his first day on the bus. One-on-one type discussions with randomly selected pupil passengers in the privacy of the principal's office confirms the likelihood of distortions in both statements. The pupil was, indeed, insubordinate to the driver but not sufficiently so to be denied transportation privileges; the driver was demanding but not discriminately so.

Discussions with both parties, again conducted separately and again in the privacy of the principal and the transportation supervisor's offices, may result in a compromise acceptable to all concerned. The pupil may be allowed to retain riding privileges on a conditional basis; the driver may be mildly rebuked for a lack of tact in dealing with on-board disciplinary acts. The outcome, more importantly, avoided the likelihood of involving competing community pressure groups and the possibility of embarrassment to school officials.

Cooling-Off Periods

In some instances, rival pressure groups are unable to reach acceptable compromises. Sex-related incidents are among the more difficult to resolve. Sometimes, such charges are justified; in other instances, they are not. When such are leveled against school bus drivers, or other school personnel, complete investigations are in order. Often, a "cooling-off" period will afford a beleagured administrator with a chance for a successful and peaceful solution. During this period, both groups are provided with ample opportunity to assess the situation, to plot new strategies and to review existing alternatives. Charges can be investigated, leads can be explored, statements can be proved or disproved but, more importantly tempers that once flared so easily can be calmed and the discussions that seemed so impossible to conduct in a meaningful manner can be continued in an atmosphere that is more conducive to a settlement of the problem.

Reaffirmation of School Board Decisions

By their very nature, school board decisions often create controversy. In nearly every case, it is important that board members stick together. Two examples may help illustrate this point. First, school board A refused to fold under pressure from the bus drivers seeking union recognition as a means of obtaining a board-rejected salary increase. Even though the board's firm stance resulted in the discontinuation of transportation service for the remaining six weeks of the school year, it, nevertheless, successfully blunted the thrust of a determined pressure group without alienating the public so adversely affected. Second, school board B voted to discontinue transportation service on side roads for distances of less than

one-half mile. The action was challenged immediately by a hastily formed pressure group and, in the face of fierce opposition at the next board meeting, was rescinded as quickly as it was approved.

Summary

Community pressure groups exist for many reasons and are quite active, at one time or another, in most school districts. They are more frequently the result of a controversy rather than a contributory factor to its development. They can be supportive of a cause or in opposition to it. In any case, one truism is readily identifiable in every instance—pressure groups are dedicated to a cause.

The characteristics and functions of pressure groups are easily recognized. From a characteristic viewpoint, they are usually over organized or under organized, well informed or poorly informed, remarkably dynamic or noticeably static, and overly optimistic or decidedly pessimistic. This, however, is not the case from a functional standpoint since such groups generally operate with one over-riding objective in mind, i.e., to effect change in an orderly or disorderly manner. The cause for such action may extend from bus route revisions to questioned disciplinary actions, to vehicle assignments or salary disputes. In either case, the action may be negative or positive and conflict with predetermined desires for change is the exception rather than the rule.

There is no best way to deal with pressure groups. Some methods, however, are better than others. The most successful involve an observance of compromises, "cooling-off" periods and reaffirmations of school board decisions. Each is effective to a degree but dependent upon the circumstances for maximum results. Compromises, for example, may work without the necessity for cooling-off periods but the procedures observed may involve greater time lapses. Reaffirmation of school board decisions, on the other hand, is often the simplest and most desirable approach to follow. Such action could, and frequently does, require nothing more than the enforcement of current school board policy. School administrators experienced in dealing with community pressure groups are not only aware of such corrective procedures but also aware of the one that offers the best approach to a successful solution.

Chapter 3

Preventing Driver Unrest

School districts are experiencing difficulty in obtaining good school bus drivers. In fact, school officials in many districts are experiencing difficulty in finding any kind of driver. Even more disturbing is that many of those that are employable require substantial investments in staff time and school funds.

Major Causes of Driver Unrest

Several causes of driver unrest are easily identifiable. Most, understandably, can be credited to social, political and economic considerations.

Social Considerations

School bus drivers are often influenced by a variety of sociological factors. They are, for the most part, members of the hard-working, lower, middle class. They prosper in the traditions of rural America and expect little more than the fruits of their labor earned from the sweat of their brows. Many are semi-retired. Others accept employment on a part-time basis. Most, however, accept the job because of a deep-seated love for children and the exhilaration that comes from being associated with them.

Parents are often responsible for much of the satisfaction realized by a good bus driver; they are also responsible for much of the disappointment experienced by those less suited for the task and, ultimately, any decision that compels them to look elsewhere for more satisfactory and less-demanding employment. Discipline, for example, does not begin inside the bus; it begins in the home and parents who fail to assume this responsibility are usually among the first to condemn the bus driver for any

efforts to enforce school board policy or hesitance in dealing firmly and positively with such disturbances. The consequences of a lack of parental support are less than encouraging to the experienced; they can be disasterous to the beginner and often are.

The average bus driver is haunted by the fear of legal entanglements resulting from the discharge of their responsibilities. Settlements from accidents involving pupil injury or even loss of life are often influenced by the victim's social status. Rural parents in this social order are less likely to petition the courts for indemnities than parents of children in the upper-middle or higher social classes.

School districts across the country are plagued by liability concerns and continue to struggle with the many facets of the problem. Accident reports and follow up investigations have become the norm for even minor incidents. (See Chapter 8.)

The strength of character inherent in the working public is, unfortunately, a source of vulnerability for most drivers. They tend to be followers rather than leaders and, as such, are easily influenced by those among them with greater charisma. Agitators, reformers and other types of reactionaries, for example, are capable of wielding extraordinary powers over the unsuspecting when the cause seems worthy of their support. School officials that have been victimized by strikes are quick to note that most strikes are instigated by a few but supported by the mass. This sociological phenomenon has created many problems for school officials in many areas, including transportation.

Economic Considerations

Few school bus drivers are able to realize a full livelihood from their employment in this capacity. The vast majority look upon the job as part-time employment, some see it as a way to supplement other types of employment and still others use it as a means of adding to the income contributed by other members of the family. Even though many drivers look upon the task as part-time, most are eagerly sought by school officials, loved by transported pupils and respected by their tax-paying parents. They are trusted, admired and revered by all segments of the public since they contribute more to the success of the pupil transportation program than any other segment of the population with responsibilities in public education.

The best-loved and most respected school bus drivers are usually not problem drivers. These successful drivers are usually well-accepted by parents because of the absence of serious on-board disciplinary problems. Such drivers are able to communicate with their pupil passengers and they do so by detecting the individual differences among them and making allowances for them in their day-to-day contacts. Accepted, successful

drivers, then, are drivers that love and get along with their passengers, their tax-paying parents and the school officials to whom they are responsible. They are not likely to embrace radical ideas or actions nor to withhold services in support of other drivers with less loyalty and dedication to the job.

Many school districts, unfortunately, have a small nucleus of drivers who are not particularly dedicated to their jobs. Such drivers see the job only for the salary it provides rather than for the opportunity for interaction with youngsters it permits. These drivers are frequently between jobs at the time of employment and, consequently, more likely to press their demands for greater salary increases and fringe benefits than the school districts may be able to include in their transportation budgets. Their performances are sometimes less than satisfactory, their relationships with pupil passengers are frequently strained and their attitudes often contribute to a state of unrest throughout the community. Their desires for continued employment, then, are based on security rather than service, and, for this reason, their presence within the school bus fleet may often pose a problem for school administrators.

School districts across the nation are nearing or have reached the point in time when wages and benefits have improved in most other occupations but not for school bus drivers. As districts confront a smaller work force and fewer qualified applicants, they must face the fact that low wages and a lack of fringe benefits are a major part of the problem and that they must now compete for the best employees.

Political Considerations

School bus drivers, as with other school district employees, should be hired on the basis of their qualifications. Good hiring practices should include enough pre-employment screening to drastically reduce, if not eliminate altogether, the employment of applicants unsuited for the job. Drivers who are carefully screened before hiring are usually involved in fewer resignations, seldom require disciplinary action and frequently accumulate lengthy periods of tenure within the school district. The number of exceptions are relatively few and infrequent.

While most school districts have hiring practices that prevent school board members or managers from influencing employment decisions, some political influence is a fact of life. However, employment practices, based upon nepotism and other forms of favoritism, should be avoided because they circumvent the screening process carefully developed to attract the best qualified driver for the existing vacancy. Hiring an unqualified driver can place the lives of transported pupils in a state of jeopardy that cannot be justified. In short, school bus drivers should be employed on the basis of what they know rather than who they know.

Methods of Resolving Driver Unrest

Most school bus drivers have little, if any, desire to become involved in disruptive practices. Practically all, however, have strong feelings on the subject of equity in salary and route assignments and, when such are ignored or taken for granted by the management, even the most dedicated drivers will react promptly and seek a redress of their grievances. Such reactions should be expected and only the most naive administrator will try to ignore the inevitable. Even the most loyal drivers cannot ignore the pressures of their peers for a sustained period of time without becoming a party to the cause.

Administrators in the better-operated school districts are extremely sensitive to the needs of their driver personnel. This sensitivity is responsible for a variety of practices designed to upgrade the quality of program service and to improve the professional attitudes and skills of the driver force. Such administrators, fully aware of the fact that the program is dependent upon the performance of the district's many school bus drivers, use all the resources available to obtain the cooperation and support of all drivers. Such efforts include the development of incentive plans, the awarding of annual bonuses for superior job performance, annual awards banquets and a number of attractive benefits, including sick leave, vacation and retirement credits.

Incentive Plans

A number of incentive plans are used in school districts. Some plans have greater merit than others, but all have some beneficial effects on driver performance and employee morale. Some plans, for example, provide drivers with monetary allowances for achieving accident-free service, meeting time schedules consistently and attending all scheduled safety clinics. Such plans, contrary to the claims of their critics, are not buying service; they are guaranteeing service. When used wisely and administered fairly, such plans can contribute significantly to the overall quality of service.

Driver performance must be evaluated carefully when monetary allowances are a part of the incentive plan. Some drivers may omit incriminating aspects of an accident if the information would place their monetary rewards in jeopardy. Many school administrators are, understandably, opposed to monetary awards for this reason. Such plans, however, need not be abandoned in the face of criticism; they must be linked to an improvement in driver performance. If an incentive award of a few dollars keeps drivers feeling appreciated, and dedicated, and if this feeling, in turn, will guarantee their pupil loads safer and more efficient rides to and from school, then such monetary sums are not foolishly wasted but wisely invested.

Bonus Awards for Superior Performance

Rewarding drivers for a superior performance is also looked upon with mixed emotions by school administrators. Some administrators view the practice as an essential public relations gesture that results in a genuine and lasting contribution to the quality of service. Others view it as nothing more than a futile attempt to obtain a level of service from drivers that they should already be providing. Both points of view have merit and neither is completely right nor altogether wrong. Many school bus drivers, for example, perceive their jobs in terms of nothing more than just getting pupils to and from school centers. To such drivers, the salaries paid are for services rendered and what is received is usually adequate compensation. Other drivers, however, view the job in an altogether different perspective. They view the task of getting pupils to and from school as only part of the job. How pupils are transported is of far greater concern to them. Because of this concern and the efforts they put forth to make the trip as safe and comfortable as possible, school administrators can justify bonus awards.

Annual Award Banquets

Bus drivers are special people employed to do special jobs. Some drivers are more special than others because of the efforts they put forth on a day-to-day basis. Pupils that are fortunate enough to ride on buses operated by such drivers are assured of safe, efficient and economical transportation. These drivers, in turn, are entitled to the respect and appreciation of the parents of their transported pupils, the cooperation and support of school officials and, in general, the good will of the taxpayers who assume the overall costs of transportation services.

School officials frequently acknowledge the contributions of their drivers and other program personnel with an annual banquet, financed with designated public funds. The banquet program is structured to provide recognition for those drivers who have distinguished themselves by rendering exemplary service during the year. Such banquets are often attended by community leaders with special interests in their school program and members of the news media who will take the driver's accomplishments to the public. Such displays of community interest and administrative-level support are of inestimable value in maintaining desired levels of support from program personnel and in combating those pressures that contribute significantly to the unrest among driver personnel in a growing number of school districts.

Fringe Benefits

The difficulty experienced in attracting and keeping good school bus drivers differs from school district to school district. However, the problem

can often be traced to a variety of conditions ranging from poor salary in some districts to less-than-desirable working conditions in others. Such problems are growing and, consequently, challenge school officials. This trend is especially true in some districts. For example, rural school districts with severely restricted economies find it difficult to raise the funds required to pay bus drivers an acceptable salary. Naturally, drivers willing to accept such poorly funded positions are of two types: those that do not have to rely on the job for their livelihood but love being associated with young children, and those that need the money whatever the amount. Unfortunately, there are sometimes not enough of the former and too many of the latter.

Wealthier school districts have reduced the impact of the problem by committing more funds to their pupil transportation programs. Many have been quite successful in increasing the amenities offered drivers, including, but not limited to, sick leave, paid vacation, insurance coverage and retirement benefits. Such fringe benefits often reduce turnover among school bus drivers within the district. Most districts have been wary of increasing bus driver salaries significantly for fear of similar demands from other district employees.

Driver-Related Organizations

Bus drivers are frequently influenced by two distinctly different driver-oriented organizations. These organizations, referred to as associations and unions, were formed for the purpose of improving the working conditions and advancing the economic interests of their respective members. They differ in some respects but both find favor and disfavor with drivers and administrative leadership. An association is often better received because it derives its leadership from within the driver ranks. A union, on the other hand, is sometimes opposed because its leadership comes from outside the ranks of its membership.

Unions frequently clash with school officials over such matters as disciplinary actions, route adjustments, schedule changes, salary increases, changes in equipment or route assignments. Association leaders may also oppose such actions; however they may more often attempt to resolve matters "in house."

Bus drivers' associations often serve effectively as a buffer between drivers and the administrative staff members with responsibility for pupil transportation and offer inherent advantages to the school district. An association, for example, can assemble drivers voluntarily for in-service meetings and participate freely in safety-oriented activities scheduled by the administration.

Summary

School bus drivers should be highly respected employees within the school district. They are the school district's first and last contact with the taxpayer on a day-to-day basis. The quality of the school program is usually judged by their dedication to the task; if they are punctual each trip, if their buses are clean and otherwise well-maintained, if they communicate with their passengers commendably and if they conduct themselves in a professional manner, the school program is considered acceptable by most standards of judgment.

School bus drivers are human beings, however, and often feel the pressures of social, economic and political frustration. Economics play a strong part in the overall employment arena, and often drivers become adversaries with school officials over pay and fringe benefits. Unfortunately, transported pupils, under such circumstances, become the pawns in the game.

Political considerations, such as nepotism and other forms of favoritism, are often responsible for much of the unrest in the driver ranks and should be outlawed. School districts combat driver unrest in a number of ways. Awards of certificates and plaques for superior achievements are widely used by school administrators in a growing number of districts. Others rely upon incentive plans that reward the better, more dedicated and skillful drivers. Some districts even offer cash bonuses for accident-free driving records, and a growing number are recognizing the value of providing drivers with an attractive package of fringe benefits. An aggressive program of driver recognition and remuneration may help forestall the establishment of drivers' unions.

The formation of driver associations is generally supported by school officials because of their emphasis on inservice development. Labor unions, on the other hand, are often discouraged because administrators perceive that they promote, rather than discourage, unrest within the driver ranks.

Chapter 4

Recruiting and Training Drivers

School bus drivers are the key to success in any program of transportation service. For this reason, it is imperative that every effort be made to attract, employ and keep the best qualified person behind the wheel at all times. Driver sources, however, are limited; consequently, school administrators are finding it increasingly difficult to employ the type of person that is needed to assure a maximum degree of safety for the transported child. Once hired, drivers must be constantly retrained and upgraded to ensure their reliability.

School Board Obligations

Local school boards must assume responsibility for the formulation and adoption of policies to keep accident-producing situations to a minimum and, if at all possible, to eliminate them altogether. Unfortunately, there is no one all encompassing, clear cut way to solve this problem. However, improving driver performance is a key area of concern. School boards are confronted with a three-fold challenge: to select the best drivers available, to detect potential problem-developing situations and to quickly correct or eliminate problems before they become realities.

The wise board of education will insist upon the development of a selective screening process, since qualified drivers do not acquire these qualities operating pick-up trucks, passenger cars, farm tractors or even two-ton trucks though such experience is, unquestionably, beneficial. They acquire them through training, driving experience, and more training; therefore, school administrators, working in harmony with their local school boards, can facilitate the process by being more selective in the employment of driver personnel, more restrictive in excusing such personnel from attending scheduled training sessions and more responsive to the needs associated with their job performance.

Employment Standards for Drivers

Carefully screening school bus driver applicants may require a level of selectivity that goes beyond that normally observed in the employment of other operational personnel. School bus drivers, by virtue of their tremendous responsibilities, must be completely qualified to operate the many types of transportation equipment covered by their licenses. The types of equipment may include vehicles classified as auxiliary units, the traditionally popular conventional body-over-chassis combination and the more sophisticated transit type units with pusher or puller drive trains powered by gasoline or diesel engines.

Possession of the required type of license does not necessarily mean that all requirements for successful service have been met. Concerned and dedicated school administrators insist that all bus drivers participate in a district-sponsored inservice training program prior to the beginning of the school year and, in some instances, state agency-sponsored refresher training programs of varying lengths after the school year begins. These are followed with appropriately designed safety meetings conducted by local officials at specified intervals throughout the school year.

Other common standards for the employment of drivers include age limits, physical examinations and upstanding character.

Age Limits

All states specify age limits that are sufficient to ensure adequate physical strength and a level of emotional development that is considered essential to a satisfactory job performance. As previously noted, the standard will vary from state to state and may include a requirement that an applicant have held a valid driver's license for a certain number of years.

Physical Examinations

Most school officials agree that medical exams should be administered by physicians approved by the local boards of education or governmental bodies with administrative authority over the public school program. There is no agreement upon the frequency of such examinations but a majority call for a physical for all drivers prior to the beginning of the school year with an additional physical at the beginning of the second semester for drivers over 55. Some states are more restrictive than others which, to a degree, help to explain the lack of uniformity in medical examination requirements.

Character

Evidence of good moral character, enforced with personality traits considered conducive to stable relationships and efficient service, are essential in all instances. The investigation of all listed references, as well as the

forwarding of fingerprint files to state and federal enforcement agencies, constitute the best precaution that can be taken against the employment of an applicant with a carefully concealed criminal and/or driving record. (See Appendix F.)

Economic and Community Pressures

Much of the difficulty in employing and keeping capable school bus drivers can be traced directly to a variety of community pressures originating from the actual operation of the school bus. (See Chapter 5 for a more detailed discussion on the subject.) From a community pressure standpoint, pupil-driver, parent-driver or even teacher-driver relationships become so involved as a result of misbehavioral problems and resulting disciplinary actions that administrative involvement is frequently necessary to resolve the differences. All too often, the school bus driver becomes frustrated and seeks employment elsewhere.

Sometimes school bus drivers finds their pocketbooks adversely affected by school board policies. This frequently happens when bus drivers are forced to participate in state-operated training programs or inservice activities scheduled during the course of the school day when bus drivers may be working at another job. Again, the inevitable occurs. Another resignation is submitted and routinely accepted; the next application is pulled from the files and the selection process starts over again.

In some instances, local boards have elected to utilize the services of other school employees in a school bus driver status in order to reduce the difficulty experienced in obtaining qualified drivers for transportation equipment. The practice, as one might suspect, has its advantages. The employment of classroom teachers as school bus drivers, for example, contribute to a reduction in salary expenses, provide a better level of supervision of the transported pupil and extends the teaching opportunity for such drivers beyond the normal confines of the classroom.

The arguments against the procedure are equally as convincing. Classroom teachers may, or may not, be good drivers; they will definitely be absent from a number of important faculty meetings and driver training sessions scheduled during the day; they will deprive other citizens of employment in this capacity and, perhaps, be required to spend much of their time enroute that would be needed in the grading of papers and preparing the next day's lesson plans. Few are able to successfully counter the conflict in job assignments.

Factors Related to Job Performance

The success of the pupil transportation program is more dependent on a professional performance by the school bus driver than any other factor in program service. The welfare of every child and, for that matter, the bus

itself is directly related to the skill, attitudes and decisions of the driver. This fact alone substantiates the importance of a driver's contributions and further emphasizes the care that must be exercised in employment. In the strictest sense of the term, there can be no justification for the employment or continued employment of a driver that is not willing to emphasize the health and safety of the pupil passengers.

Health Requirements

Among the valid criteria to be evaluated in the employment of driver personnel is the applicant's general condition with special emphasis on vision and hearing qualities. The applicant's general health and musculoskeletal functions must assure as much safety in the operation of the vehicle as good health will permit. Visual acuity should provide a field of vision based on sight qualities of 20/20 in one eye with 20/40 vision or better in the second eye or corrected to 20-30 vision in both eyes. Hearing quality is equally as important and should have no more than 30 cb hearing loss in the better ear at frequencies of 1,000 and 2,000. Such hearing limitations are acceptable because they will still permit the understanding of ordinary conversational speech within acceptable prescribed distances. Applicants found to have mental or emotional imbalance, color blindness, epilepsy, organic heart disease, diabetes controlled by insulin or defective limbs should not be considered for employment under any circumstance. This is true even though adequate measures of compensation have seemingly been taken to offset the adverse effects of these disabilities. (See Appendix G.)

Personal Qualifications

School bus drivers should epitomize perfection in character development and personal hygiene. They must be neat in appearance, courteous to teachers, students and parents; abstain from the use of profanity, alcohol or tobacco while transporting students; sweep and clean their buses daily; obey all state and local traffic ordinances; promote safety habits with their pupil loads; report misconduct of students to the school principal; wear seat belts at all times and assist motorists in passing their school buses between scheduled stops.

Professional Relationships

Bus drivers may, or may not, be classified as an employee of the school district but, by virtue of their positions of public trust, they accept certain responsibilities and are expected to discharge them to the satisfaction of school officials, local boards of education and the tax-paying parents of their transported pupils. This unique privilege of being first to greet pupils

in the morning and the last to bid them goodbye in the evening permits an opportunity to develop lasting friendships and possibly to reduce, if not eliminate altogether, discipline problems that seem to flourish on many school buses. School bus drivers are often the school board's best and most respected contact with the public, primarily from the fact that they are often the only contact many parents ever establish with the public school program. The manner in which drivers discharge their assigned responsibilities then either reflects positively or negatively on the total school program. For this reason, the influence of school bus drivers extends far beyond the duties imposed at the time of employment and serves to illustrate, quite vividly, the importance of their roles in the educational process.

Improving Driver Performance

School bus drivers should have the opportunity to take advantage of both pre-service (See Appendix A.) and inservice aspects of equipment operation. Pre-service training, consisting of both classroom and behind the wheel-type instruction, should precede the actual operation of the loaded school bus REGARDLESS of the driver's previous driving experience. Such instruction should be followed at regularly scheduled intervals with in-service training sessions designed to call specific attention to such critical problem areas as railroad crossings, dangerous intersections, pupil behavior and ambiguities in existing regulations. Both types and levels of training are essential to the attainment of desired competency levels among driver personnel. They have been, and will continue to be, one of the major administrative and operational weaknesses in the total program of pupil transportation service. Needless to say, such must be provided for driver personnel on a continuing basis.

Handling of Severe Disciplinary Problems

The school bus driver is not trained to discharge the administrative duties of the school administrator. The driver's expertise is in the operation of the school bus; consequently, the driver's job is not that of a disciplinarian but that of a professional school bus driver. This, in itself, is a full-time job and requires his undivided attention. On certain occasions, however, the need for disciplinary action will arise and when it does, it must be administered firmly, fairly and quickly. Sometimes, the driver can handle the situation; at other times, he cannot. When situations of this type occur, board policy should make it perfectly clear that the driver is not to administer corporal punishment or remove unruly pupils from his bus.

Conduct, warranting disciplinary action of a serious nature, can best be administered by the school principal. There are several reasons for this

assumption. First, most school bus drivers are not trained to deal with the more serious behavioral problems. Responsibility for corrective action resulting from this type behavior is assigned to the school principal who is expected to act quickly and to deal effectively with the problem until the case can be decided by the local board of education. Second, the principal has custody and administrative responsibility of the pupil from the time he leaves home in the morning until he is returned in the evening. Since the driver's responsibility is operational in scope rather than administrative, his primary concern must be for the safety of the transported pupil; consequently, on-board problems must be handled by the principal in the same manner as similar problems originating in the classrooms are handled and, finally, the principal is academically trained to deal more effectively with the various differences of individual pupils. Knowing *what* to say and *how* to say it is just as important as knowing *when* to say it. The principal, who probably could not operate the bus, should, therefore, be in a better position to make such decisions because of this training than the school bus driver is without it. At any rate, the key word is *support* and the bus driver *must* have it. The board's immediate obligation is to see that he gets it. (For a more detailed treatment of the subject, see Chapter 5.)

Safe and Comfortable Transportation Equipment

The reliability of equipment is often synonymous with the adequacy of service. Equipment breakdowns, for example, adversely effect the quality of service and inefficiency in service endangers the prospect of continued community support. All too often, the school bus driver is victimized for such failures when the cause of the problem is traceable to deficiencies in equipment specifications.

The bus driver cannot be held accountable for the quality of service when the bus the driver was assigned is deficient in engine size, axle weight rating, brake lining area, and transmission speeds. Equipment purchased in this manner does not *save* the taxpayer money; it generally ends up *costing* money; therefore, the school board that places greater emphasis on saving the tax dollar than on the development of equipment specifications that would protect the health and provide for the safety of the transported pupil or the welfare of its driver is not being realistic in terms of meeting school district needs. Sending the bus driver out on a route with an unsatisfactory bus makes about as much sense as trying to seine the Mississippi River with a butterfly net.

Pupil Transportation Policy Revisions

The administrator of pupil transportation is a key person in the plans of every board of education with an implemented program of transportation service. School bus drivers look to the transportation supervisor for

leadership on a day-to-day basis. The bus driver is the board of education to them; therefore, it is imperative that the driver translate their wishes for program improvements into recommendations the school board can consider. Bus routes, for example, should not extend onto side roads that pose hazards to the transported pupil and the transporting unit.

Rules governing the conduct of transported pupils and the driver's responsibility for the enforcement of school board policy are other matters that should be incorporated in the school board's policy. The school bus driver that has not been informed of these policies cannot be held accountable for a complete and impartial enforcement of its contents.

Summary

School bus driver personnel play a prominent role in the success of the pupil transportation program. Their contributions are largely dependent upon the support received from local boards of education. They cannot, for example, render effective service unless the board is supportive of desirable employment practices, responsive to the need for resolving problem-developing situations and willing to act quickly to institute procedures that are needed to upgrade the quality of program service.

Driver improvement practices should emphasize the selection, training and supervision of program personnel, the disposition of enroute disciplinary problems, the determination of equipment specifications and the revision of current school board policies.

Chapter 5

Solving On-Board Disciplinary Problems

School officials in every district operating a program of pupil transportation agree that pupil discipline is essential to pupil safety. For this reason, every effort must be exerted to control the behavioral patterns of transported pupils. This, in essence, means that occasional offenders must be dealt with tactfully, chronic offenders firmly and habitual offenders suspended from riding privileges.

Disciplinary action resulting from such infractions must be consistent with established policies adopted to govern them. If policies have not been developed, they should be adopted and disseminated to both pupils and parents at the earliest opportunity. Many school districts distribute a copy of the regulations governing the school bus operation to the parents of transported pupils at the beginning of the school year. The practice is frequently instrumental in minimizing the adverse effects of severe disciplinary measures and often results in appreciable reductions in on-board disturbances.

Types of Behavioral Problems

Most behavioral problems fall into two major categories: destructive and non-destructive. Destructive behavioral problems are generally classified as acts of vandalism which may, and generally do, take on any number of distinguishing characteristics. Cut seats, broken windows, first-aid pilferage and phyiscal abuse of other pupils are typical of this type of behavior. Non-destructive behavior is noticeably different in that it consists of acts classified primarily as disruptive in nature. Unnecessary noise, abusive language, enroute seat changing, rubber band shooting, pin gouging, smoking, and other types of improper conduct are examples of this type of behavior.

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Underlying Causes of Behavioral Problems

The causes of disciplinary problems are sometimes difficult to determine. Many, however, can be related to the variety of relationships germane to school bus operations: driver-pupil, driver-parent, pupil-pupil, and, in certain instances, pupil-teacher.

Experienced drivers are generally able to avoid driver-pupil problems, are seldom involved in driver-parent disputes and are rarely victims of pupil-teacher clashes. They are not as successful, however, in avoiding the aftermaths of pupil-pupil related problems when both parties are passengers on the same bus. Such clashes are only temporarily settled on school premises; they are, all too often, continued on the bus. In such cases, the bus driver must act quickly to restore order and reduce the possibility of an injury to passengers.

Dealing successfully with the variety of problem-causing relationships is considerably more difficult for the inexperienced driver. A driver who has yet to acquire the patience and tact to deal with the typically vocal and often rebellious junior high schooler is frequently subjected to a variety of driver-pupil related problems. Such problems, depending, of course, upon how they are handled, are frequently carried into the home only to resurface the next day when the bus arrives. Such outgrowths of driver-pupil problems become less pronounced as the driver gains confidence in the ability to handle on-board disciplinary problems.

The following examples of behavioral problems are presented to illustrate the prevalence of such relationships.

Pupil-Pupil

Bus driver A took his eyes from the road for only a second or two to see what was causing a disturbance in the back of his bus. Two hours later, he regained consciousness in a hospital room three doors down the hall from the rooms of five of his passengers, who had also been seriously injured in the accident. Fortunately, they recovered without crippling or disabling physical impairments. The bus, however, was a total loss.

Shortly after departure, two junior high school pupils began scuffling on a fully loaded bus. Driver B, who was relatively inexperienced in the operation of school bus type equipment and apparently even less capable of dealing with the behavioral problems of her passeangers, took no immediate disciplinary action against the offenders. Less than five minutes later one of the two collapsed in the seat, fell into the aisle and died before reaching the hospital. The fracas that had its beginning in a locker room incident earlier in the day ended with the death of an innocent, but misbehaving pupil and a pending lawsuit for an inexperienced, unsuspecting bus driver.

Driver-Pupil

Bus driver C was an experienced driver who left the driver compartment to forcefully remove an unruly pupil to a seat directly behind him. The ensuing fracas left the pupil load in a state of confusion, the unruly pupil with an assortment of bruises and the driver with an impending lawsuit. Fortunately, the pupil's parents were public-spirited and law abiding; the driver was lucky and smart enough to profit from the experience. He has, from that day forward, been careful to avoid personal confrontations with recalcitrant pupils. It is much easier, he found, to refer disciplinary problems that could not be handled without a personal and possible physical confrontation to the building principal who had both the unquestioned authority and the training to deal with them in a professional manner.

Teacher-Pupil

Already late and not more than 100 yards away from the loading zone, Bus driver D noted a disturbance in the rear of her bus. Without pulling to the roadside and stopping, she took a quick glance in the rear view mirror. Almost immediately, she noted her predicament and realized that there was no time for evasive action. A collision with the school bus in front was eminent and there was nothing she could do. Both vehicles were slightly damaged but fortunately no one was injured. At a greater speed and under the same conditions, the result could have been tragic. A subsequent investigation revealed the altercation to be a revenge-oriented incident stemming from an earlier disciplinary action taken by the classroom teacher. The combatant merely transferred his momentarily vented feelings against his teacher to a fellow passenger seated in the confines of the bus.

Parent-Driver

An extremely vocal group of more than 30 parents appeared before the board to request the dismissal of Bus driver E. A state-level investigation revealed the following contributory factors that prompted the petition:

1. The bus driver, motivated by a desire to abide by certain religious convictions, assumed responsibility for regulating certain codes of conduct that were beyond the scope of his authority.

2. Pupil misconduct, in many instances, reflected the expressed comments of their parents who were openly critical of the bus driver's usurpation of the building principal's authority.

The school board's positive, non-discriminative action, based on recommendations eminating from the investigation, resolved the problem before it resulted in a serious accident.

These five incidents are by no means *all* of the instances of pupil misconduct that can be expected during a given school year; nor are they, in every instance, representative of the type of accident that results from such patterns of behavior. They do, however, call attention to the presence of a variety of behavioral patterns that contribute to any number of serious problems on school buses.

Methods of Resolving Disciplinary Problems

School officials have utilized a variety of methods to resolve disciplinary problems on school buses. Periodic revisions of school board policies, reaffirmation of administrative procedures, continuation of inservice training for school bus drivers and, more recently, an extension of the curriculum to include instruction for school bus riders are typical of the problem-solving methods utilized by the more successful school officials.

Each of the above methods, understandably, contribute to the problem-solving process and its overall effectiveness is noticeably influenced, if not completely dictated, by the nature of the offending act. Resolving vandalism-related problems, for example, must be considered within policy provisions; abusive language, on the other hand, may be handled more effectively on the basis of administrative procedure since it would be both impossible and impractical to list all possible infractions of a disciplinary nature in the compilation of school board policies.

Board Policy Revisions

Frequent revisions of board policy are necessary to keep the policy current with the changing aspects of program service. Changes in eligibility requirements are known to have influenced the extent of program service in many school districts. Any change(s) resulting from this condition should have been noted as an amendment to the official policy document. This precaution is administratively sound and serves to clarify the board's position in the event any laxity in enforcement or the over-zealous enforcement of its provisions result in legal implications.

School boards should be consistent in policy development and demand the same from school officials charged with enforcement responsibilities. Procedures for handling disciplinary problems and the punishment for each infraction should be clearly detailed. The punishment should not be excessive for the infraction committed and always tempered with sufficient understanding to discourage, rather than encourage, a continuation of undesirable behavioral practices. (See Appendix B.)

Administrative Procedure

School officials strive for consistency in enforcing conduct codes and most do a good job. The efforts of others, however, are often ineffective because

of a lack of understanding between those entrusted with policy development responsibilities and those assigned the responsibility for enforcement.

Experienced administrators approach problem solving in a clear-cut and decisive manner. First, they acknowledge the worth and dignity of school bus drivers. Secondly, they recognize the individual differences of such drivers, and thirdly, they display a sense of fairness in dealing with the many problems they are likely to encounter. School bus drivers are accepted by school administrators as important members of their program staff. They are provided opportunities for input when matters involving equipment operation are being discussed, and when disciplinary action against non-conforming pupils is being considered, they are afforded the support to which they are entitled. Bus drivers are assumed to be correct until proven in error.

Different disciplinary problems require different administrative approaches. Defiant pupils, for example, must be handled differently than students suspected of cutting seat cushions. Most bus drivers, despite an absence of special training in the art of handling such problems, are able to avoid the possibility of personal confrontations. Others are not as fortunate; consequently, these drivers provide school officials with some of their more serious problems. Such drivers are likely to create problems rather than solve problems; therefore, they should be removed from the district's driver force as quickly as it is possible to tactfully relieve them of their duties.

Inservice Training for School Bus Drivers

Bus drivers must continually strive to be professional and to act like responsible adults. Unfortunately, many pupils are able to influence driver actions to a greater degree negatively than drivers are able to overcome objectionable behavioral patterns.

School administrators should recognize the individual differences between school bus drivers and their transported pupils and act quickly to do something about them. They should schedule frequent driver training clinics to familiarize bus drivers with such differences. What to expect, how to react and when to respond to mischevious pupils are as important to the driver as knowing how to start the bus, when to change its gears and what to do to stop its forward motion. Properly planned and professionally administered inservice programs often mean the difference between success and failure in dealing with on-board disciplinary problems.

Classroom Instruction for Transported Pupils

The need for providing transported pupils with instructions in safe riding practices has never been greater than at the present. (See Appendix E.)

Such instructions, when supplemented with a review of behavioral practices and attitudinal development procedures, can be quite effective in combating the tendency to misbehave by transported pupils.

Many pupils do not realize the hazards created by loud talking, group singing and other types of boisterous conduct on board the bus. Such activities are especially hazardous at busy street intersections, rural road junctions and railroad crossings. Those pupils that are willing to cooperate with the bus driver when informed of such dangers should be complimented; those that are not should be made aware of the consequences and held accountable for their actions.

The value of meaningful and valid course content is closely related to the effectiveness of the instructional procedures observed. Classroom teachers should call on bus drivers, safety officials and central staff personnel with special knowledge of accepted safety practices in pupil transportation for help in educating their students. In many instances, classroom sessions can be concluded with dramatizations before the student body or parent's association meetings. The results are generally entertaining, extremely informative and often rewarding for both performers and those in attendance. Eliminating even one accident during a given school year makes it all worthwhile.

Summary

Pupil discipline has been a concern of school officials for many years. The most experienced drivers are able to control the more objectionable forms; inexperienced drivers, however, encounter problems in dealing with even the mildest forms. Both, however, are convinced that good discipline is essential to pupil safety.

Most behavioral problems fall into two readily indentifiable categories: those that are destructive and those that are essentially non-destructive in nature. Destructive behavioral problems are appropriately classified as acts of vandalism. Cut seats, broken seat frames and first-aid pilferage are excellent examples of this type of behavior. Abusive language and boisterous conduct represent the more frequent examples of non-destructive behavioral problems.

Several causes of disciplinary problems are known to school officials. Driver-pupil, driver-parent, pupil-pupil and, occasionally, pupil-teacher problems arise to plague the school bus driver. The school administrator becomes involved when the problems cannot be solved by the driver; the parent involvement generally occurs as an outgrowth of the driver's efforts to maintain discipline on the bus; the teacher's role in on-board disciplinary problems is practically non-existent but a continuation of on-campus, pupil-pupil disturbances are frequent occurrences on school buses when both combatants are passengers on the same vehicle.

A variety of methods are utilized to resolve on-board disciplinary problems. School board policies, for example, are in a constant state of revision because of the ever-changing complexities of an even more complex society. Administrative procedures are changed to reflect the growing "professionalism" of the more experienced school bus driver, and the necessity for instilling the same in the less experienced; inservice training programs are provided to prepare both experienced and inexperienced drivers to better cope with the many facets of the disobedient pupil, and similar training is being provided for transported pupils as a part of the regular classroom curriculum. Such methods will not solve all of the problems in pupil transportation, but they will enable school officials to deal more effectively with those that do occur on a day-to-day basis.

Chapter 6

Complying with National Safety Program Standard 17

Most of the nation's public school districts have continued to intensify their efforts to comply with the multi-faceted provisions of National Safety Program Standard 17. Some have beat the deadline for compliance with time to spare; some just barely made it; some just barely missed it; and others, unfortunately, are still months, if not years, away from total compliance. Such variations in compliance prompt the following questions from concerned parents and school administrators: What is so important about this particular safety standard? How does it differ from the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards? Is it really worth the effort? What are the consequences for non-compliance?

Scope, Purpose and Definitions

National Highway Safety Program Standard 17 was promulgated on May 2, 1972, by the Secretary of Transportation under authority from Chapter 4 of Title 23, U. S.C., more poularly known and referred to as the Highway Safety Act of 1966. More specifically, the language of Section 402(a) of the Act reads as follows:

> "Each state shall have a highway safety program approved by the secretary designed to reduce traffic accidents and deaths, injuries and property damage resulting therefrom. Such programs shall be in accordance with uniform standards promulgated by the Secretary."

Standard 17, except for one amendment on May 8, 1973, which did not appreciably affect school bus operations in many school districts, has

remained unchanged. This has enabled school officials in such districts to proceed with greater interest and enthusiasm in their efforts to implement its many provisions. The results are a tribute to the professionalism of school board members, the ingenuity of school officials and a district-wide level of support from the citizenry in general.

Scope

The standard represents the most comprehensive effort undertaken at any level to upgrade the quality of transportation service. Most of its provisions have been observed in many school districts since the original introduction of pupil transportation service, but with the exception of a relatively small number of the more innovative districts, never to the degree specified in the text of the standard. The standard, for example, provides for the formulation of minimum requirements for a state highway safety program. Such requirements are designed with more in mind than just getting children to and from school centers with a minimum number of disabling accidents. They are designed to eliminate such accidents in their entirety.

Transporting children safely, efficiently and economically requires a cooperative effort at the state and local level. The role of the state agency with enforcement responsibilities is to provide the administrative leadership required to stimulate and coordinate the local effort. Local officials, on the other hand, are expected to forge a mass of children, a fleet of buses and a network of routes into an effective program of pupil transportation service. The success of their efforts has been a source of pride for all parties involved in the effort.

Purpose

Safety Program Standard 17 was designed to improve the overall quality of pupil transportation service in the nation's school districts. More specifically, its goal was to eliminate school bus accidents altogether.

Definitions

Definitions set forth in the standard for Type I and Type II vehicles define school buses as "any motor vehicle with motive power, except a trailer, used to carry more than 16 pupils to and from school."[1] (The definition includes vehicles that are used to carry school children and school personnel *exclusively* and does not include vehicles that carry school children *along with other passengers* as part of the operation of a common carrier.) The same definition applies to Type II vehicles with the following exceptions: 1) the capacity of such units cannot exceed 16 pupils and 2) it is not applicable to motor vehicles used to carry members of the owner's household.

Type I vehicles are further subdivided into two additional classifications both of which are used extensively in most districts. The more widely used conventional school bus varies in capacity size from 17 to 72 passengers and is readily identified by its long hood. The transit, most frequently, ranges in capacity size from 60 to 90 seating accommodations and is used primarily in suburban residential areas of the school district. Both play prominent roles in the transportation of children to assigned attendance centers.

Type II units are more varied in both classification categories and seating arrangements. They range from passenger cars to one-ton panel trucks; from units with conventional seating to those with longitudinal seating arrangements; and from coloring patterns that are as varied as the hues in the rainbow. Equipment in this type is, by far, the most difficult to bring into compliance with the provisions of Standard 17 but it can be done and with the continued support of local school boards; it will be done with perhaps less difficulty than contemplated.

Basic Requirements

The preamble to the four basic requirements embodied in the content of National Safety Program Standard 17 states that:

> "Each State, in cooperation with its school district and political subdivisions, shall have a comprehensive pupil transportation safety program to assure that school vehicles are operated and maintained so as to achieve the highest possible level of safety.[2]

This implies that each requirement is closely related to, and dependent on, the other. Pupil transportation staffs within the various state departments of education have recognized the intricacy of this relationship and worked diligently with the membership of other agencies with similar responsibilities in an effort to affect compliance with all requirements of the standard at the earliest possible date.

Administration

Responsibility for implementing the standard is clearly defined: "There shall be a single state agency having primary administrative responsibility for pupil transportation, and employing at least one full-time professional to carry out its responsibilities for pupil transportation."[3] The state department of education has been designated in most states as "the single state agency;" consequently, the commissioner of education, or state superintendent of public instruction, becomes responsible for coordinating implementation efforts, monitoring the progress recorded in local school districts and initiating an "operating system for collecting and reporting information needed to improve the safety of school vehicle operations . . . ."[4]

Identification and Equipment of School Vehicles

Some states have not complied with all provisions of the identification and equipment of school vehicle requirement. Some Type II units, for example, are required to meet *all* requirements for Type I units or *none* of them. This necessitates an exploration of the following questions before the state's position on the requirement can be determined. Should small vans, for example, that do not have equipment to control traffic be equipped to do so? Does failure to require National School Bus Glossy Yellow paint for small vans subject pupils on such vehicles to the possibility of greater accident involvement levels? Should stop signal arms and flashing lights be installed on *all* small vehicles? Can a green or blue painted van blend into traffic more safely than a van painted National School Bus Glossy Yellow?

School districts, by meeting or exceeding state specifications, have achieved compliance with the other equipment-related provisions of the requirement. All boards require Type I buses, for example, to be painted National School Bus Glossy Yellow, to have identification of uniform letter size, to contain bumpers of glossy black, to be equipped with the eight-light warning system and to have a system of both convex, rear view and rear vision mirrors.

School districts also exercise some control, though perhaps not enough, over the sale of surplus equipment and the operation of buses utilized in the transportation of other than pupil passengers. In both instances, the language of the requirement is specific:

> *"Any school vehicle permanently converted for purposes other than transporting pupils TO AND FROM SCHOOL shall* be painted a color other than National School Bus Glossy Yellow, and *shall* have the stop (signal) arms and equipment required in section IV B. 1 (d) (8 light warning system) removed."[5]

> "Type I vehicles . . . transporting primarily passengers other than school pupils *shall* have the words, SCHOOL BUS, covered, removed, or otherwise Concealed . . . ."[6]

The present practice of painting out the words "School Bus" and selling the vehicle without repainting or removing the stop signal arm and overhead flashing lights does not meet the above referenced provision of the standard. This practice contributes to the erroneous impression that many people, including tourists, have about the structural integrity and mechanical condition of the school buses observed operating on public roadways. Most school districts have good school buses and if their school boards would require the repainting of all discarded units *before the sale*, they could prevent this misconception and comply with the statute forbidding the use of the color, School Bus Glossy Yellow, on discarded buses.

Operation

Personnel. The operations requirement is the most comprehensive of the four since it controls, to some extent, the personnel, pupil instruction and vehicular aspects of the program. States, for example, are responsible for "the development of a plan for selecting, training and supervising personnel with responsibilities involving the transportation of pupils to school attendance centers."[7] Local school districts, in turn, are required to see that drivers have the appropriate type driver's license and meet all special physical, mental and moral requirements established by the state. (In the State of Tennessee, for example, these requirements are embodied in the provisions of Section 59-706; Sec. 49-2208, TCA, and to a somewhat more restrictive degree, in State Board Regulation B, (1), Part IV, which requires a minimum of five (5) years driving experience with a valid unrestricted operator's license before they can be employed as a school bus driver.)

Pupil Instruction. The requirement for pupil instruction is more relaxed. It is specific in its reference to the frequency of instruction but somewhat vague as to the content of the training. In the absence of more specific instructions, local school districts are expected to conduct both required classroom sessions and evacuation drills on a semi-annual basis. Classroom teachers have demonstrated an ability to be both imaginative and resourceful in their use of school bus drivers as instructional personnel. This procedure enables the transported pupil to identify more closely with "the captain of the ship" and the resulting experience is naturally more meaningful and beneficial to all in attendance.

Vehicle Operation. Implementing the many aspects of the vehicle operation provision of the requirement will be more challenging and, consequently, more difficult to achieve. The state agency and its local school districts are charged with the responsibility for "developing plans to minimize highway use hazards to vehicle occupants, other highway users, pedestrians and property . . . ."[8] This can be accomplished through a review of existing routes, the relocation of hazardous stops, the establishment of restricted loading zones, the revision of school board policies and a general evaluation of all operational aspects of the total transportation program.

Seating. Complying with the seating provision of the requirement is an altogether different matter. Again, the language is unmistakably clear:

"*Seating shall* be provided that will permit each occupant to sit in a seat in a plain lateral location intended by the manufacturer to provide seating accommodations for a person at least as large as a 5th percentile adult female as defined in 49 CFR 571, 3."[9] (A 5th percentile adult female, as defined in the above reference, is 59 inches tall, weighs 104 lbs., and requires 12.5 inches of seating space.)

School officials are encouraged to coordinate bus routing and seating plans and to eliminate auxiliary seating accommodations as a means of eliminating standees. Much remains to be done in the area of bus route and seating plan coordination, but auxiliary seats have been prohibited on school buses in all states for more than 20 years. Transportation supervisors, in their effort to reduce the number of standees by the September 1977 deadline, have been staggering the opening of schools to obtain greater equipment utilization, redefining eligibility limits for transportation service and, where time and operating funds permit, backtracking routes to the point where the overload occurred. Many states, however, have enacted legislation to legalize the practice in their school districts.

Vehicle Maintenance

The maintenance requirement addresses itself to the upgrading of pupil transportation equipment. The state agency is charged with the responsibility for establishing and maintaining compliance with the inspection and maintenance provisions of the requirement. All vehicles, regardless of equipment ownership, *must* be maintained in a safe operable condition at all times and inspected on a semi-annual basis or more often. School districts are required to *develop* preventive maintenance programs, to *instruct* drivers to perform daily pre-trip inspections of their vehicles, and to *report* in writing any noted defects that might affect vehicle operation.

The Evaluation Process

> "The pupil transportation safety program shall be evaluated at least annually by the state agency (Department of Education) having primary administrative responsibility for pupil transportation. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) shall be furnished a summary of each evaluation."[10]

Evaluation is, or should be, a continuous process. School districts with the financial resources and scope of operation to justify the services of a full-time transportation supervisor are usually more able to evaluate their programs in this manner. Those that are not, however, frequently experience considerable difficulty in identifying program needs and instituting appropriate measures to correct them. Fortunately, the Standard 17 drafting committee recognized this difficulty and sought to alleviate the problem by incorporating the evaluation requirement into the standard as a *state* rather than a *local* responsibility.

The evaluation instrument should permit a fair and realistic analysis of program service. It should be simple, yet comprehensive enough to measure effort on a uniform basis without regard to the scope of operation. Unfortunately, the evaluation requirement in Standard 17 makes no specific reference to the content of the instrument; consequently, its simplicity

and comprehensiveness are somewhat dictated by the expertise of the staff assigned the responsibility for its development.

The language of the requirement is responsible for numerous questions that are, seemingly, without specific answers. What action, for example, will be taken at the national level against non-conforming states or school districts within such state? What degree of noncompliance, if any, will be tolerated? Is NHTSA authorized to withhold funds under the provisions of the standard? Does the standard contain any enforcement authority?

Obviously, there is no enforcement authority detailed in either the requirement or the standard. This, of course, does not rule out the possibility that federal funds could be withheld since the authority for such action could be written into some aspects of the Highway Safety Act other than one of its safety program standards. If such action is taken, however, it, more than likely, would be initiated against the state rather than the school districts within its borders.

Any petition for leniency resulting from conflicts between requirements in the standard and state board regulations or state statutes should be carefully reviewed. Compliance with the seating requirement, for example, is not likely to occur as long as the current overload statute in many states is in the code; therefore, it would seem that school districts are entitled to some degree of leniency from both state and federal officials until the conflict is resolved. Any granting of such leniency, however, does not relieve school officials of the responsibility for complying with those requirements that are not in conflict with such regulations or statutes. Planning school bus routes, locating school bus stops, determining loading and unloading zones, conducting daily pre-trip equipment inspections, instituting driver selection, supervision and training procedures and requiring the use of seat belts by drivers are attainable goals in all school districts and exemptions from compliance with such requirements should not be permitted.

Summary

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has exerted a profound effect upon the quality of pupil transportation service in the thousands of school districts across the nation. Construction standards formulated in the agency have been received with mixed emotions by state and local school officials and, in many school bus manufacturing establishments, with outright hostility primarily because of their controversial content and the lack of research that preceded their development. This element of suspicion and opposition, however, did not surround the implementation of the agency's one and only school bus safety operation standard which

was favorably received and enthusiastically supported by school officials with pupil transportation related responsibilities.

National Highway Safety Program Standard 17 represents the most comprehensive effort undertaken at any level to upgrade the quality of pupil transportation service. Its scope was nation-wide; its purpose was unmistakably clear; the definition of terms embodied in its contents left no doubt as to the extent of its applicability; its basic requirements were sufficiently comprehensive to encompass all aspects of program service and the evaluative process was more than adequate to assure a fair and impartial analysis of program service even though some questions still remain as to the absence of its enforcement authority.

[1]Section III. Safety Standard 17.
[2]Requirement IV. Safety Program Standard 17.
[3]Requirement IV. A. 1. Safety Program Standard 17.
[4]Requirement IV. A. 2. Safety Program Standard 17.
[5]Requirement IV. B. 3. Safety Program Standard 17.
[6]Requirement IV. B. Safety Program Standard 17.
[7]Requirement IV. C. 1(a). Safety Program Standard 17.
[8]Requirement IV. C. 3(d). Safety Program Standard 17.
[9]Provision IV. C. 3(d). Safety Program Standard 17.
[10]Requirement V. National Safety Program Standard 17.

Chapter 7

Reviewing Alternatives to Vehicle Replacement Policy

School districts in many, if not all, states are operating some over-age and obsolete equipment with little regard to the consequences of their actions. Transported pupils in these districts are frequently subjected to inadequate, uncomfortable seating accommodations, inconveniences resulting from frequent equipment failure and unnecessary safety hazards associated with the operation of such units.

School officials are not always responsible for the operation of such equipment. Dissatisfied parents, disgruntled employees and rising costs of operation frequently surface to harass already distressed and often frustrated school officials. Parents must assume some responsibility when they express the need for better equipment but vehemently reject the tax increase that is required to provide it. School employees become responsible when they object to driving such "junkers" but cannot generate enough support to get them off the road. Unfortunately, while both parties are complaining, the condition of equipment continues its predictable rate of deterioration.

An Overview of Alternatives

The best solution to the problem may rest with an acceptable answer to the following question: Which way do we go—remanufactured equipment *or* extended years in service? Arguments, of course, can be advanced for both even though most school officials prefer to purchase new equipment when given a choice. They feel that 10-year-old buses should be retired and

that any extended service for such equipment should be opposed more vigorously than any plan for their "refurbishment." They argue, with some success, that the continued use of obsolete vehicles for any additional period of time is wasteful to the taxpayer and hazardous to the transported child. They concede, however, that refurbishment could conceivably correct such vehicle deficiencies and result in fewer operational expenditures. Both plans have some degree of merit. Any implementation of either, however, should be delayed until it is carefully evaluated.

The Extended Service Approach

Several southeastern states, including Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia, have made state-wide decisions on the subject of vehicle replacement and a number of states in other parts of the country are known to be considering such action. Decisions to limit the years in service for pupil transportation equipment are defensible in view of the escalating costs that can be expected. Most pupil transportation specialists are of the opinion that repair costs increase dramatically at the beginning of the eighth year in service. Others, of course, do not consider such costs excessive until after the 10th year is completed. All, however, express varying levels of support for some type of restrictive replacement policy and though they have not been able to agree on a uniform one, most seem to be in agreement that a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 12 years is about all one can expect from equipment that has been operated on rural roadways. (The limits are increased to 12 and 15 years for equipment in operation on paved roadways and suburban streets.)

Opposition to the adoption of a vehicle replacement plan can be expected from conservative funding agencies. Such opposition, however, becomes short-lived once the objections to needed capital outlay requirements have been overcome and the costs of operational expenditures begin to decline. Care, however, must be taken to see that each transporting unit is maintained in accordance with a fully operational preventive maintenance program otherwise the policy becomes a self-defeating policy. Equipment gives no better service than the maintenance it receives; consequently, excessive costs of maintenance may force a retirement of the vehicle before its eligibility expires. A replacement policy functioning under such handicapping conditions contains little, if any, redeeming value.

Any effort to extend the period of time in service for transportation equipment should be preceded with a commitment to provide for its replacement within a reasonable time period. Some of the more progressive states are amortizing the replacement of equipment at the completion of eight years in service. The practice is a commendable one, but not many

states are financially solvent to the extent that they can support a funding effort of this magnitude. The most prevalent funding practice limits the level of state support to that required to implement a more conservative replacement policy.

The Remanufactured Bus Approach

Any decision to utilize remanufactured school buses must be explored from a standpoint of its impact upon each aspect of the basic relationship in transportation service. This impact can be expected to encompass the total concept of program service but it will, more than likely, affect the objectives of safety and economy to a greater extent than any of the other program objectives.

The remanufacturing of school buses is a common practice in several of the southeastern states. Such programs utilizing prison inmates in these states offer numerous advantages to the financially plagued school district. On the other hand, the program could, if improperly monitored, function to the detriment of the district. This potential problem then must be eliminated during the planning phase if desirable results are to be achieved.

The primary emphasis areas associated with the remanufacturing process are as follows:

Scope of Operation. Remanufacturing used school buses is practiced on a rather limited basis. This practice, given time and the opportunity to improve its relatively obscure beginning, could well make a lasting contribution to the cause of pupil safety without contributing to the essential markups imposed by the manufacturers of new equipment.

At the present time, reliable commercially operated remanufacturing plants are difficult to locate. The more successful and widely publicized are operated by the correction departments in the southeastern states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida and Texas. Little is known about these governmental sanctioned remanufacturing opertions other than the fact that their labor force is composed of prison inmates. The remanufacturing process in these facilities provide services that range from little more than cosmetic clean-ups to a complete renovation of the individual unit. They may operate on a seasonal basis or throughout the year depending, of course, upon the demand for such service. Rates for service rendered are, understandably, minimal when compared to the cost of a new vehicle.

Extent of the Remanufacturing Process. The process may, or may not, involve a renovation of the total vehicle. The chassis, for example, undergoes a complete inspection during which time decisions are made relative to the extent of the work that is to be performed. The engine, clutch, transmission, propeller shaft, rear axle, steering, brakes, suspension,

wheels, tires, alternators, front bumper and exhaust system represent some of the areas of the chassis that are restored to their original specifications.

The body undergoes a similar inspection designed to determine the extent of needed repairs. Doors, windows, flooring, seating, mirrors, side panels and lighting are typical of the componetry examined for possible deterioration. Each is repaired or replaced to restore the unit to its original specifications. In these instances where original specifications will not meet current federal safety standards, changes are made to bring each unit into compliance with applicable state and federal standards.

Quality of Workmanship. Warranties and service agreements are provided by the remanufacturing facility and state inspectors are available to conduct on-site inspections before the vehicle is released for service in the school district. Engines, transmissions, steering systems, braking systems, rear axle assemblies, suspension and cooling systems are covered by such warranties. Exhaust systems, light bulbs, hoses and front tires are replaced with new parts and the following are remanufactured to original specifications: steering systems, stanchions, driver controls, windows (and controls), doors and rear view mirrors.

Cost of the Service Rendered. Costs vary in proportion to the service rendered. Each unit, however, is subject to a base charge which is influenced by the chassis utilized on conventional units and the type of unit to be remanufactured, i.e., conventional or transit models (pusher or puller). The base price for the more widely purchased chassis-equipped conventional unit is generally less than that charged for a less standard type chassis. This is necessary because of the wider variations in chassis componetry for these units which are not generally found on the more standardized units. Transit units, especially those equipped with rear engines (pusher type), and *all* units equipped with automatic transmissions are, understandably, subject to price quotes on an individual basis.

Solvency of Remanufacturing Establishments. Care must be taken to safeguard the investments of local school districts if, and when, the decision is made to permit the operation of remanufactured school buses. By requiring evidence of financial solvency, states can provide their school districts with needed protection from manufacturers attempting to operate on limited capital reserves. The absence of surety and/or performance bonds would encourage the opening of numerous commercially operated remanufacturing plants that could easily take advantage of the district unless such precautions were taken to guarantee the quality of the finished product. School districts that might be interested in the remanufacturing process are entitled to this level of protection and appropriate steps should be taken to see that it is provided.

Summary

School officials are faced with a seemingly endless struggle to provide the safest possible equipment at a cost that is within their sometimes insufficient budgets. The resulting situation forces them to give serious consideration to every conceivable plan that offers any chance for improvement in program service without necessitating a compromise in pupil safety.

The extension of vehicle replacement policies and the remanufacturing of current vehicles in operation appear to be the most desirable alternatives available to school officials. Efforts to prolong the years in service for pupil transportation equipment must be weighed in terms of its negative and positive impacts on program service. The practice can delay needed capital outlay expenditures for a few additional years but such delays are frequently offset by costly equipment repairs and obvious weaknesses in the efficiency of program service. Resorting to the practice of remanufacturing equipment can be equally as objectionable but the results are not likely to be as negative. Buses to be remanufactured are usually in better mechanical condition when the renovation takes place; they have not been in service for as many years, and rust, metal breaks and other forms of deterioration are repaired before the vehicles are returned to service. Obviously, no remanufacturing should be permitted until appropriate specifications have been developed and other precautions have been taken to protect the school district and the transported child.

Chapter 8

Utilizing School Bus Accident Reports

Any effort to collect and utilize school bus accident data should deal objectively and realistically with the pre-determined goals of program service. This will necessitate a review of current definitions of the term "Pupil Transportation," a discussion of the existing relationship between the major objectives and related factors of program service, and a review of the problems involved in providing this service.

Definitions

Pupil transportation means different things to different people. To some, it is an enormous giant with a ravenous appetite that reaches into every aspect of the school program in search of funds to perpetuate its survival. To others, it is the great equalizer of educational opportunity for all children, and to still others, it is nothing more than a necessary evil.

Most school administrators would support the thesis that pupil transportation is essential to the success of the rural school program and concede that it is making rapid strides in urban districts where extended city limits and experimentation in school grade organizational patterns figure prominently in the school program.

The Relationship

Every program of pupil transportation, regardless of the scope of service provided, embodies a relationship between the major objectives of safety, adequacy, efficiency and economy and related factors such as the vehicle, the driver, the administrator and the mechanic. The relationship is so interdependent that a deficiency in any aspect of its composition will eventually result in a complete deterioration of the overall program. For

example, consider the status of any program with good buses, good maintenance, good administration, but poor drivers. The strengths in the first three areas cannot offset, for sustained periods of time, the weakness of poor drivers. Consequently, the level of safety will be less than desired and immediate action will be required in order to restore the program to maximum effectiveness. Eventually, the efficiency, economy and adequacy of the overall program would also suffer.

The Problem

Safety should be the major objective in any program of pupil transportation. A school administrator or, for that matter, a board of education that elevates the objective of economy above the objectives of safety, adequacy and efficiency is, in effect, placing a greater value on the taxpayer's dollar than on the health and safety of transported pupils. Such actions cannot be justified.

School bus accidents are daily occurrences on the nation's roadways. During the 1985-86 school year, approximately seven percent of the school buses in operation on a regular route basis were involved in accidents. Ninety percent of these accidents involved collisions with other vehicles; in eight percent of the accidents, the school bus collided with fixed objects and in the remainder such involvements were classified as non-collision type accidents.[1] More expressly, a yearly average of school bus accidents for the decade ending with the 1986 school year, claimed the lives of 40 children. Twenty-five of these innocent, unsuspecting children perished beneath the wheels of the school bus they were riding. The remainder were struck by other vehicles as they were crossing the street or roadway to get to the bus or away from it.[2] In addition to these children, an average of 5,000 other persons per year were injured in these school bus accidents.[3]

If there is anything encouraging about school bus accident statistics, it would have to be the fact that such could have been worse and yet, no competent, conscientious school administrator would be willing to take credit for a job well done until assured, beyond any reasonable doubt, that nothing more could have been done to improve the situation. Improvements in equipment design and driver performance can help reduce school bus accidents within local school districts throughout the country.

The Safety Record

Numerous factors have contributed to the safety records compiled in the area of pupil transportation. First, and foremost, is the tireless efforts that have been made on the part of state and local directors of pupil transportation, school transportation personnel, including both maintenance and driver employees, school bus body and chassis manufacturers, allied in-

dustry personnel, the staffs of certain professional organizations, including law enforcement agencies and the motoring public in general. No accidents are acceptable; however, the safety record for pupil transportation far surpasses that of any other commercial transportation industry.

State and Local Contributions

Any analysis of how the safety record was achieved must, of necessity, focus attention upon the manner in which state and local officials discharge their assigned responsibilities. There can be no denial of the importance of adequate financing but, as important as it is, financing alone is not enough. It is still dependent upon the initiative and the competency of the supervisor in charge. If the supervisor is incompetent, even full funding will not be sufficient to guarantee the level of service required to meet established program needs within the district. On the other hand, a little improvising here and there by a competent administrator can go a long way toward offsetting a limited budget.

Records of past accidents, when properly utilized, become a valuable instrument in upgrading pupil transportation service. (See Appendix D.) A competent transportation supervisor will look upon them as a means of effecting greater reductions in the total number of accidents experienced.

The fact that most school bus accidents generally occur during the first month of the school year, on straight stretches of road, under favorable atmospheric conditions, and in 66-pupil capacity size vehicles confirms several suspicions. First, inservice and pre-service training programs in such school districts must not be preparing drivers sufficiently. Second, increased emphasis must be placed on school bus driver training at the state or local level. Third, local supervisory services must be strengthened immediately. Fourth, driver selection procedures must be evaluated more frequently. Fifth, local administrators may be operating over-size units on low-performance roads where adequate turn arounds, etc., are not available.

An evaluation of school bus accident records, for example, in the State of Tennessee for the 1985-86 school year, may illustrate the need for additional emphasis on these five areas of management.

1. *63 percent of the reported accidents involve drivers with less than five-years experience.*
2. *46 percent involve drivers beyond 51 years of age. (Such drivers represented 38 percent of the total driver force.)*
3. *80 percent involve drivers experiencing their first accident.*
4. *76 percent were classified as preventable.*
5. *66 percent involved damage claims of $250 or less.*

6. *89 percent were attributed to human error.*

7. *30 percent occurred on primary roadways; 48 percent on secondary roads; 14 percent on city streets; and 7 percent on school premises.*

State-Level Obligations

Local administrators frequently ask what assistance can be expected from the state level to facilitate improvements in the safety record within their school districts. Most state officials are strong advocates of local control over matters with local application. Pupil transportation, unquestionably, falls in this category but such philosophical beliefs do not mean that state level school officials are free to abdicate their responsibilities to local school officials. On the contrary, such officials must intensify their efforts to assist local officials in developing continuous levels of improvement. In the process of rendering this service, state officials must be sure that they are leading instead of driving local officials in the direction of established goals which should be developed, whenever possible, with their assistance. If written policies have not been developed to govern their programs of service, then state level services should be provided to assist them in preparing such. If periodic inservice training programs are not being provided for their driver personnel, then states should assist in the development of such programs. If districts insist on operating vehicles with pupil loads beyond the rated capacity of the transporting unit, then the state should move to prevent it. If such a practice continues because state law permits it, then the law should be repealed.

The collection of accident data is essential to the elimination of future accidents in program service. State departments of education or other specification developing agencies should be utilizing school bus accident data in the revision of their school bus specifications. Information of this type is essential to pupil safety because it will help determine whether school bus design is a contributing factor in a given accident. States that are not providing such constructive leadership to their local school districts should do so as quickly as staff and funds become available. States should also incorporate a mandatory accident reporting procedure into their state board regulations. Fortunately, most states have initiated reliable collection procedures. The resulting safety records are, without question, more than adequate to substantiate the wisdom of their action.

Despite the progress that has resulted from the collection and utilization of school bus accident data, some local transportation supervisors are still disinterested and non-cooperative, perhaps because they do not have the support of their superintendents and boards of education. State pressure may help win the support of local school officials.

Summary

Pupil transportation means different things to different people. All, however, are seemingly in agreement that program adequacy is dependent upon the effectiveness of the existing relationship between the major objectives and related factors of program service. Most, for example, agree that any weakness in the relationship eventually dooms the program unless it is corrected within a relatively short period of time, but all agree that safety must be the dominant characteristic in every program in operation.

School officials are searching constantly for ways to improve the quality of program service. Statistics on school bus accidents provides them with one of their most valuable sources of data. Such data reveal the characteristics of school bus accidents and assist in the development of those activities that are needed to combat them.

[1]School Bus Accidents By States, SCHOOL BUS FLEET, Dec.-Jan. 1987 p. 31.
[2]School Bus Loading and Unloading Survey, KANSAS DEPT. OF EDUC., 1986, as reported in the School Transportation Director, Vol. 7, number 6, March 1987, p. 2.
[3]Op Cit

Chapter 9

Transporting the Handicapped Child

Educating the handicapped has been a concern of educators for many years. While many administrators felt that the special school centers met the academic needs of these children on an acceptable basis, others, including school psychologists and many concerned parents, felt that the social ostracism associated with such centers negated much of their academic achievements. This concern resulted in a search for newer and better instructional methods and resulted in the passage of the Federal Handicapped Act, P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act. These actions of the Congress mandated that handicapped children are to be educated, to the *maximum extent practicable*, in regular classes that were previously restricted to the non-handicapped child. The legislation virtually eliminated the operation of special transportation equipment as a "class of vehicles" with the exception of that used in those instances where handicapped children could not be transported satisfactorily in regular school buses. In general, the emphasis is away from "separate" and more toward the integration of all children in a regular school program.

Instructional Procedure

The school district's instructional procedure for educating handicapped children should place considerable emphasis upon the necessity for a viable pupil transportation program. The absence of desirable instructional facilities in many of the more sparsely populated rural districts makes it virtually impossible for such children to obtain access to educational services without efficient transportation service. Many boards find it equally as difficult to provide the level of service desired when it becomes

necessary to transport children to special education centers located in adjacent school districts. The ensuing results are often trying experiences for the parents of children seeking such educational opportunities and the board of education that is striving to provide it.

Some school administrators have attempted to meet the transportation needs of such pupils on a year-to-year basis. The planning associated with such efforts is generally short-range and almost always ineffective. The extreme mobility of families with such children, for example, requires a periodic evaluation of program services and a continuous level of planning that cannot be provided within short time spans of one year or less. Most boards, fortunately, are able to avoid such pitfalls by requiring administrative actions that are designed to meet the needs of handicapped children on an acceptable basis. Both children and school officials stand to benefit from such efforts.

The better instructional program efforts occur in those districts that have taken the time to develop a functional school board policy. In such school districts, policy development is supplemented with additional policy statements that are adequate to meet the needs of the district's various handicapped children. Such policy statements must address the factors that are more commonly encountered in the movement of children from the residence to the school center. Providing for the needs of some without regards to the needs of others generally results in an unsatisfactory level of service on a district-wide basis.

Policy Developmental Factors

The more professionally developed policy is based on an observance of the major factors encountered in the transportation of the handicapped child. The number of children in need of transportation service, the type and frequency of the handicapping condition, the location of individual residences within the district and the weight of non-ambulatory children are critical data areas that cannot be overlooked. Assigning drivers with limited physical strength to equipment that is serving extremely overweight children without the benefit of an aide does not reflect favorably on the school administrator or the board's adopted policy.

The better board policies observe certain additional factors that may be considered more administrative than operational-oriented in some school districts. Such factors, nevertheless, figure prominently in any assessment of program adequacy. The clarification provisions of eligibility requirements and notations of child control procedures are as important as any of the variety of factors that relate more directly to the identification of the child and his handicapping condition. More succinctly stated, knowing "what" to do is just as important as knowing "how" to do as far as the child's welfare is concerned.

Program-Related Responsibilities

The instructional procedure is further characterized by a number of self-defining, program-related responsibilities for drivers, parents, teachers and students. Each makes its own important contribution to the program effort and detracts accordingly when assigned responsibilities are not assumed in a responsible manner.

Driver-Related Responsibilities

Some driver-related responsibilities are considered administrative-oriented. However, most responsibilities associated with the transportation of children are driver-related. For example, responsibilities related to the operation of the vehicle that necessitate the development of an awareness of certain operational-related activities are driver-related. Knowledge of proper emergency treatment procedures for the various handicapping conditions of transported children is as important to the driver as awareness of their various handicapping conditions. Perhaps of even greater importance is the realization of the medical needs of each transported child, an awareness of what emergency actions can be taken to assist the child until proper medical attention can be provided and a knowledge of the most direct route to the nearest medical facility. However, requiring bus drivers to demonstrate proficiency in administering safety and first-aid procedures is more administrative than driver-related.

Parent-Related Responsibilities

The parent plays a prominent role in the transportation of the handicapped child. Preparing the pupil for the arrival of the bus is no easy task. Care must be taken to see that the student is properly clothed, nourished and toilet prepared before the bus arrives. The student must be at a previously arranged pick-up point in the morning and met at the same place in the evening. The nature of the service provided does not permit tardiness on the part of benefitting parents despite any number of unforseen problems that could, and usually do, develop with children so afflicted.

Parents are expected to assume other responsibilities that are related to the transportation of their children. Some children are frequently unable to attend school on a regular basis; consequently, it becomes the responsibility of the parent to notify the bus driver when such absences are contemplated. Such notification is important because drivers are frequently required to travel a far greater distance for children with handicaps and the trip would be wasted if the student is not attending school.

Child-Related Responsibilities

The vast majority of handicapped children are responsive to established regulations and extremely cooperative with the bus driver and the aide.

Some, however, are not and, in such instances, become quite disruptive and sometimes outright belligerent. The bus driver must, under such circumstances, demonstrate a calmness and a firmness. The driver must quickly assess the situation and act appropriately. The age of the child, the nature of the handicap and the student's attitude will determine the corrective action to be taken. When force is necessary to control inappropriate conduct, and it frequently is, it must be exercised in a manner that will minimize the possibility of injury to the child. Most drivers are able to exercise such care.

Teacher-Related Responsibilities

The teacher is responsible for those in-classroom and out-classroom activities that have a direct influence on the handicapped child. The teacher at school, like the parent at the bus stop, must be prepared to receive the child when the bus arrives and to get the student ready for the bus when it departs in the evening. During the day, the teacher must be prepared to attend to physical needs without neglecting the professional obligation to provide for intellectual development.

Major Handicapping Conditions

Children are handicapped in a number of ways. The Rules and Regulations developed by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to govern the implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act, Part B, identifies such conditions in the following manner:

> "Handicapped children ... are mentally retarded, heard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, deaf-blind, multi-handicapped, or as having specific learning disabilities, who, because of those impairments need special education and related services."[1]

DEFINITIONS OF HANDICAPPING CONDITIONS

Definitions from the same source identify such handicapping conditions as follows:

(1) "Deaf" means a hearing impairment which is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistics information through hearing, with or without amplification, which adversely affects educational performance.

(2) "Deaf-blind" means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and

other developmental and educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for deaf or blind children.

(3) "Hard of hearing" means a hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, which adversely affects a child's educational performance but which is not included under the definition of "deaf" in this section.

(4) "Mentally retarded" means significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with defects in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

(5) "Multi-handicapped" means concomitant impairments (such as mentally retarded-blind, mentally retarded-orthopedically impaired, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. (The term does not include dead-blind children).

(6) "Orthopedically impaired" means a severe orthopedic impairment which adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g. clubfoot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g. poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.) and impairments from other causes (e.g. cerebral palsey, amputations, and fractures or burns which cause contractures).

(7) "Other health impaired" means limited strength, vitality or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems such as heart conditions, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

(8) "Seriously emotionally disturbed" is defined as follows:

i. The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance:

A) An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;

B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;

C) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;

D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or

E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

ii. The term includes children who are schizophrenic or autistic. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that they are seriously emotionally disturbed.

Methods of Dealing With Various Handicapping Conditions

As the above definitions indicate, different handicapping conditions require different approaches. Corrective actions for the seriously emotionally disturbed would differ greatly from those utilized in the case of the orthopedically impaired, yet similar efforts at understanding the problem of the child with both impairments would be the same. Children, for example, need to know that they are loved, wanted and respected. The need in this instance can sometimes be as great as the need for attention is to the child with serious emotional, psychological and physical maladjustments. The good school bus driver will learn to recognize such needs and initiate actions considered necessary to make their daily trips as pleasant and as meaningful as possible.

Methods utilized in effective program improvements are frequently related to the Individualized Education Program (IEP) approved for the child. Such programs include a statement of the child's present level of educational performance, goals to be achieved on an annual basis, special emphasis to be placed on short-term objectives, specific special education and related services to be provided, the extent of desired levels of participation in the regular program and a listing of those evaluation procedures to be observed in the assessment of compliance with short term instructional objectives.[2]

Program improvement methodology compliments the IEP and reinforces the intent of the program. Ambulatory children, for example, require less attention than the non-ambulatory because of their less restrictive handicapping condition. They have little need for the special education vehicle with its sophisticated electric lift and interlocking wheel chair positions that are frequently so much a part of the transportation needs of the more severely handicapped. The major need of such children is, obviously, more concerned with getting to and from assigned school centers than in meeting the educational needs set forth in the IEP. Such children can usually meet their program objectives with less difficulty than they encounter in getting to school.

Special Education Vehicles

Special education equipment is greatly improved over that operated in past years. It was no secret that the earlier vehicles were extremely crude and frequently unacceptable for pupil transportation purposes. Nor was it

any secret that the program was a low priority obligation in many districts primarily because of the sparcity of pupils requiring such service. No doubt, these factors, more so than any other, contributed to the operation of such non-school bus type vehicles and the longer periods of time in transit that resulted from the practice. Many children, unfortunately, were spending as much time on buses, if you could call them that, as they were spending in the classroom.

Times have changed and such changes are not only reflected in the thinking of the people and the manner in which they perceive their obligations to the special education program but also in the quality of the equipment that is being utilized for pupil transportation purposes. Handicapped children of today are no longer looked upon as second-class children or the children of second-class parents. They are going first class thanks to state legislatures, the U.S. Congress and a number of parents and other persons interested in their welfare. For the first time, they are attending specially constructed educational facilities, receiving their share of the school budget and riding in some of the best and safest transportation equipment on the road. The frustrating days of homebound-type instruction in the familiar but well-restricted and sheltered confines of the home, the absence of effective instructional-type experiences resulting from a lack of appropriate funding, and the long uncomfortable rides in crowded passenger cars, station wagons and panel-type vehicles for excessive distances are, fortunately, a thing of the past for the vast majority of these children. Today, they are receiving the services manifested in their dreams of yesteryears.

Special education equipment is special in many ways. The smaller vans are still very much in use but they are no longer filled with eight-foot long, minimally padded, ten-inch boards fastened longitudinally along the sides, down the middle and across the rear of the vehicle. They have been manufactured specifically for pupil transportation purposes under the watchful eye of the manufacturer and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). These Type II vehicles are subject to all requirements embodied in NHTSA's highway construction standards including such exterior standards as rollover protection, body joint strength, window retention, glazing materials and the interior standards of material flammability, seat anchorage, seat back height, seat padding and center-to-center spacing. In essence, steps have been taken to provide the handicapped child with as many comfort and safety considerations as the school board can purchase with the taxpayer's money.

Many seemingly insignificant but extremely important innovations in equipment design have been perfected in recent years. The installation of self-storing portable ramps to aid in the loading and unloading of wheel chair pupils, the development of the electric-hydraulic lift which further simplified the task of safely loading and unloading such children and the

use of seat belts or other type restraining devices have greatly enhanced the child's chance for a safer trip to and from assigned school centers. The perfection of such specialized equipment as the isolation cubicle for the autistic child is further evidence of the technological advances that have benefitted the handicapped child.

Summary

The transportation needs of handicapped children have not always been met on a satisfactory basis in local school districts. Transportation equipment was frequently inadequate, instructional facilities were often minimal at best and the quality of instruction was generally acceptable only because the parents of such children were too poorly informed to expect or demand anything better. The more severely handicapped were even more deprived. They were, for example, deprived of interaction with regular school children and offered little more than a social visit from the teacher when home visits were made.

The situation changed abruptly with the enactment of P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act. Instruction improved because of better educated teachers, improved school facilities, more adequately funded programs, safer and more comfortable transportation equipment and a better informed and more knowledgeable citizenry that was determined to correct past injustices imposed on these children. Classrooms for the handicapped were constructed as a part of the regular school building. For many children, mainstreaming became a reality rather than a possibility and long, tiresome and non-productive bus rides were no longer necessary, through such rides for many children may still be too long in the more sparsely populated sections of the district.

[1]Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Rules and Regulations, Sub-part A-General, 121.a. 5, Federal Register, Vol. 42, #763, p. 42478 (20 U.S.C. 1401 (1), (15).)
[2]Ibid, p. 42491.

Chapter 10

Evaluating the Seat Belt Issue

The recent revival of interest in the long-standing controversy surrounding the installation of seat belts in Type I school buses has resulted in both positive and negative reactions from certain members of the press, some school administrators and the lay public in general. This renewed interest is due, in part, to an absence of information on the subject. Many are unaware of improvements in construction practices, variations in gross axle weight ratings (GAWR) and the enforcement of stringent regulatory procedures; or that buses, so equipped, provide the transported child with a greater margin of safety than is afforded those riding in family-type vehicles; or that the presence of required seat belts in one class of vehicle is not necessarily an indication that they are needed in the other.

The feasibility of equipping school buses with seat belts has been carefully researched by governmental agencies and private safety-oriented organizations. Such tests, conducted at considerable expense during the past 15 to 20 years, have contributed significantly to an understanding of the problem. They have, in some instances, dispelled myths, confirmed suspicions and verified previously stated facts but they have yet to provide acceptable answers to many of the questions voiced by concerned administrators, weary engineers and the worried parents of transported children. Are school buses, for example, unsafe without seat belts? Are seat belts cost-effective? Will children really use them if they are installed? Who is responsible in the event of an accident if the injured child was not using a seat belt? Answers to these questions, of course, will not be available until further research is undertaken and completed.

The Pros and Cons of the Issue

The seat belt issue, as it relates to school buses, is not of recent origin. It emerged as early as 1966, when many of today's graduate school enrollees

were just entering kindergarten and, strangely enough, faded into oblivion before they completed elementary school. Shortly thereafter, a rash of both fatal and near-fatal accidents occurred, and the seat belt issue quickly moved from a position of obscurity to one of prominence. Seat belt opponents and proponents prepared to address the issue. Advocacy groups supporting their installation called for national studies, challenged the results of those that they would not accept and seized every opportunity to publicize their concern for the safety of children transported in non-seat belt equipped school buses; they enlisted the aid of the medical profession with its highly trained and respected professionals and played up major accidents involving school buses that resulted in pupil injuries.

State-level pupil transportation associations and other groups opposed to such usage were equally as adamant in expressing their opposition. They reminded proponents that the public was not overly enthusiastic about the prospects of installing seat belts in the family automobile, much less in a school bus and questioned the utilitarian value of the resulting investment; they expressed the concern that school bus seats were not structurally designed to support the added stress associated with seat belt usage and warned of such problems related to belt abuse by unruly children, entrapment in fire-related accidents, delays in time in transit and legal implications resulting from such usage or, more importantly, the lack of such usage by transported pupils.

Seat Belt Studies

Numerous studies have been undertaken on the subject of seat belt usage. The major studies are categorized into easily recognizable classifications: those conducted by governmental organizations, professional societies, state departments of education, transportation associations and university research facilities. Each has made significant contributions to the dissemination of information on the subject, but none have successfully resolved the issue.

Governmental Sponsored Studies

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has been in the forefront of the quest for information on the seat belt issue. Crash sled tests conducted during the period, 1968-74, confirmed that lap belts offered no additional protection for children unless they were used in conjunction with high back seats.[1] This conclusion prompted the NHTSA to adopt and promulgate its widely acclaimed school bus safety package, which was to have a profound impact on pupil safety. The package, known as the Post-DOT bus, contained a number of major Federal Motor Vehicle Safety standards that became effective on April 1, 1977. Each standard in the package was designed to regulate a certain aspect of the school bus operation.

FMVSS 217, was to regulate window retention; FMVSS 220 was to strengthen the roof structure; FMVSS 221 was to reinforce current joint strength requirements, FMVSS 222 was to place the child in a fully padded highback seat within a "compartmentalized" cavity and FMVSS 301 was to enclose the gas tank in a protective cage to prevent rupture in collisions and excessive fuel leakage.

The major federal agencies, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NSTB) were in agreement on their assessment of the seat belt issue. The NHTSA determined that within certain limits of seat spacing, compartmentalizing the pupil between high strength, highbacked, well padded seats would avoid a number of the problems associated with seat belt usage and warned that seat belt usage in school buses with low back seats would actually increase the severity of injuries to passengers in certain crash situations.[2] The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) credited the Post-DOT bus with a satisfactory performance in the vast majority of school bus accidents and noted that justification for extending seat belts to the larger Type I buses is largely non-existent.[3]

Professional Societies

Several medical organizations are actively involved in the seat belt issue. The Physicians for Automotive Safety (PAS) is most active in its support for the installation of seat belts on school buses. The organization makes a strong plea for seat belt usage on school buses but warns that such usage should be restricted to buses equipped with 28-inch-high safety-type seats, something that is noticeably missing on all buses manufactured prior to, and most of those since April 1, 1977. The American Medical Association also came out in support of seat belt usage in school buses by adopting a resolution urging support for legislation that would promote the availability of effective seat belts in all school buses.[4] Several practicing physicians also published papers theorizing that lap type safety belts will prevent more injuries than they will cause, that they can be expected to redirect the decelerating forces from the head and chest to the lower parts of the abdomen and that renal contusions and ruptures of the liver, pancreas and spleen are not likely to occur unless the seat belt is improperly worn.[5]

State-Level Pupil Transportation Associations

Several state-level pupil transportation organizations have taken strong positions on the seat belt issue. The California Association of School Transportation Officials (CASTO) conducted an exhaustive search of the literature for evidence of documented research on the subject. Its findings are largely responsible for the efforts that are being made to inform the

public of the pros and cons of seat belt usage and the reasons for its decision to oppose the installation and use of seat belts on Type I school buses.

The Pennsylvania School Bus Association (PSBA) supports its opposition to seat belts with impressive statistics compiled from a variety of reputable sources. The association introduces evidence by way of the NHTSA supposedly confirming a decline in seat belt usage in automobiles, utilizes data from the NHTSA's Center for Statistics and Analysis to support the fact that school buses experience fewer fatalities than any other mode of surface transportation and relies on National Safety Council data to provide additional support for its position.

The membership of the Tennessee Association of Pupil Transportation (TAPT), polled in a recent series of regional meetings, unanimously opposed the installation of seat belts on Type I buses and offered the following reasons to justify its position: First, the state has not experienced but two fatalities *inside* the bus since 1963, neither of which involved collisions with other vehicles. Second, pupil injuries have declined on Type I school buses by fifty-five (55) percent since 1977-78, without the use of seat belts. Third, the Association does not oppose the installation of seat belts on an optional basis, and finally, monies required for seat belts could be better spent in an effort to combat the loss of life to pupils on the *outside* of the bus where the vast majority are being experienced.

University Research Facilities

The most widely quoted research on passenger occupant protection procedures and vehicle performance grew out of a series of tests conducted by the University of California at Los Angeles. Many specialists in pupil transportation believe that the ITTE-UCLA tests should have laid to rest any thoughts about the need for seat belts on school buses even though it did conclude that utilization of the compartmental concept and the installation of seat belts on high back seats would effect even greater reductions in the fatality rate. The question left unanswered, however, was whether or not seat belts were essential to the attainment of an acceptable level of pupil safety.

Arguments for and Against the Major Aspects of Seat Belt Usage

The seat belt issue has been explored from every possible aspect of usage. Some persons, including school administrators, law enforcement officials and practicing physicians, are adamant in their support; others, including some parents of transported children, are equally as vehement in their opposition. Those supporting belt usage base their arguments on the negative consequences of side impact and rollover collisions and the positive

value of carryover usage in later life. Those opposed emphasized the positive effects of compartmentalization and the negative aspects of unconfirmed need and excessive program expenditures. The pros and cons for each aspect of belt usage are as follows:

The Side Impact Collision:

The Pro Position. Any impact from either side of the bus will result in a predictable lateral movement of the seated child. Children that are not restrained could easily be thrust into the aisle or against the side if a restraining device of some type is not installed and in use. In accidents of this type, there is likely to be more movement *away* from, rather than *into*, the protected padding of the body cavity. While injuries cannot be predicted as a result of such movement, it can be determined, with almost certainty, that the restrained child will remain positioned in its seat and, considering the severity of some accidents, this has to be a plus that cannot be ignored by school officials if they are truly concerned about pupil safety.

The Con Position. The installation of padded seat backs, top rails, seat frames and crash barriers minimizes the possibility of injuries and practically eliminates fatalities among pupils in Type I school buses. The National Safety Council reports that pupil fatalities *inside* the school bus declined from 60 in 1976, the year before the compartmentalized bus was introduced, to 15 in 1984. The fact that only 5,500 of the 21.8 million children transported on approximately 325,000 buses over more than three billion miles experienced injuries is even more astonishing. Compartmentalization obviously negates the need for seat belts on Type I school buses.

The Rollover Collision:

The Pro Position. Many school bus accidents involve one or more rollovers after the bus leaves the roadway. Unrestrained children are likely to be tossed from their seats and hurled against the unpadded walls and ceiling during such accidents. The use of seat belts will keep the child in its seat and minimize the possibility of serious injuries. The argument that the smaller children will not be able to release their seat belts while sitting upside down or that they will suffer potentially more serious injuries after releasing their belt is without sustaining merit.

The Con Position. The likelihood of avoiding injuries in accidents of this type is difficult to explain to emotional parents. Such accidents immediately conjure visions of children in non-seat belt equipped buses suffering with broken bones, fractured skulls and a variety of painful facial lacerations when, in reality, the use of seat belts may actually subject them to the possibility of even more serious injuries. Who, for example, will have

the presence of mind to free helpless children trapped in their seat belts if the bus overturns and plunges into a stream or lake? Can the bus driver, without the assistance of an aide, meet the needs of so many children in such catastrophic accidents?

Carryover Value:

The Pro Position. Psychologists, educators and many members of the public have long recognized the importance of repetitive behavioral responses. They contend that children exposed to the same stimuli for sustained periods of time, in this case twelve years, will develop and exhibit more conditioned and predictable behavioral responses. They are confident that children subjected to the habitual use of wearing seat belts on school buses will continue the practice long after their riding experiences are over.

The Con Position. Any carrover value is totally dependent upon the daily use of the seat belt and the district's commitment to safety. Few school districts have the funds to employ aides to enforce seat belt usage on their Type I school buses. Most school officials are in agreement that the bus driver cannot operate the bus, supervise belt usage and make his or her route on time. They also question the right of parents that cannot enforce seat belt usage in the privacy of the family automobile to expect the driver to do so on a school bus loaded with more than 50 restless and energetic children.

Seat Belts and Variations in Construction Practices

The seat belt issue for Type I school buses has been a controversial subject for many years, and yet opposition to their installation and use in the smaller Type II vehicles was practically nil from the beginning. This prompts many of those in favor of seat belts on Type I vehicles to ask the question, why not seat belts on "regular" school buses if they are needed on the smaller van-type vehicles?

The answer is fairly obvious to those experienced in the operation of both types of equipment. The small Type II vehicles do not contain the protective features incorporated in the large type school buses; consequently, the transported child assigned to the structurally inferior vans must be provided with special safety features that are not needed in the larger school buses. Type I vehicles, for example, are heavier, sturdier and more readily recognized as pupil carriers; therefore, it is felt that they are less likely to be involved in serious accidents and more likely to emerge with fewer injuries if they should happen to be. For this reason, seat belt opponents are convinced that children in Type I vehicles are as safe, or safer, without seat belts as those children in Type II vehicles are with them.

Summary

The current seat belt issue is a carryover from the mid-1960s when things were less complicated and people were more compromising, when seat belt proponents were not as well organized and school officials did not feel as challenged. But, of course, that was yesterday. Today, things are altogether different. Issues are more critical, people are more emotional and time is fleeting.

Many organizations, including agencies of the federal government, state transportation associations, professional societies, university research facilities and the equipment manufacturers got involved in an effort to bring the issue to an amiable solution. All made notable contributions but none was able to resolve the problem that seems to center on the side impact, rollover and carryover aspects of the issue.

The seat belt controversy continues to languish as both opponents and proponents pursue their efforts to resolve the problem. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) delighted the opponents of belt usage on school buses with the results of its recent completion of a long awaited study but the supporters of belt usage are not all that discouraged with its contents. As of this moment, time appears to be the best ally in both camps. The opponents are waiting for a vindication of their position; the proponents are waiting for legislative assistance. Both would welcome the miracle it will probably require to resolve the issue, once and for all.

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[1]"School Bus Seat Restraints and Seat Anchorage Systems", Natinal Highway Traffic Safety Adm., 1972

[2]National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Protection for School Bus Occupants, DOT HS 806 000 1981, p. 1

[3]National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), School Bus Crashworthiness Study, 1987, p. 153

[4]National School Transportation Association NEWS, Aug. 1984, p. 2

[5]Drs. Ritchie, Ersek, Buch and Simmons, Combined Visceral and Vertebral Injuries from Lap Type Seat Belts, Surgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics, 1970.

Chapter 11

Summarizing the Issues

Pupil transportation has been a part of the public school scene for many, many years. Strangely enough, times have changed but program needs have not. The first programs initiated faced problems that were surprisingly similar to those encountered in the programs of today. The employment of drivers, the procurement of equipment, the development of functional school board policies and the achievement of acceptable levels of funding have survived with the times.

It is not likely that they will be resolved with any more success in the years to come unless we can find a way to deal successfully with the following issues in program service:

1. *Program Expenditures.* Every effort must be made to spend the tax dollar wisely. This means that such conservation-oriented measures as management practices, operational procedures and maintenance provisions must be developed, perfected and implemented in order to accomplish this objective. Equipment purchases, for example, must be made on a competitive bid basis; drivers must be employed on professional, rather than personal considerations; program services must be governed by written policies and a staff must be employed that is knowledgeable enough to improve service without being forced to compromise on pupil safety or program efficiency.
2. *Community Pressure Groups.* School officials would do well to consider the internal structure of pressure groups in their continuing efforts to co-exist with them: What is their purpose? What are their objectives? What are their characteristics? How do they function? How do you work with them in a constructive atmosphere? When do you consider compromise? Answers, of course, are difficult to

acquire. They are possible, however, and the better school administrators will eventually obtain them.

3. *Personnel: Driver Unrest.* A way must be found to improve the rapport between school officials and school bus drivers. Solving the problem involves more than identifying the social, political and economic differences that characterize the relationship. It involves the establishment of employment incentives like bonus awards, recognition banquets and such fringe benefits as better pay and working conditions. The greatest potential for improvement, however, goes far beyond these recognition incentives; it extends to the level of support that is received from the parents of transported children and the lay public in general.
4. *Driver Recruitment and Training.* The importance of the school bus driver cannot be underestimated because he can make or break the transportation program. Tenure and salary considerations are essential to driver performance but such must not be over emphasized at the expense of the program effort. Changes in age limits, physical examination requirements and character development that would represent a relaxation in employment standards must be resisted and improvements in the quality of supervision and other administrative services must be effected without delay. Stringent health requirements, exceptional qualifications and attractive fringe benefits will greatly enhance the prospects for employing the better qualified applicants.
5. *Disciplinary Problems.* Getting recalcitrant pupils off the bus is not the best solution to a troublesome problem. The best solution involves an early identification of the causes of such behavior and the development of a satisfactory method to combat them. Revisions of overly restrictive board policies would be helpful but the best approach seems to be the placement of greater emphasis upon classroom instruction for transported pupils. Such instruction in behavioral practices and attitudinal development procedures can be extremely helpful in dealing with such problems. In fact, school boards *must* intensify their efforts in this direction if they are to achieve an acceptable level of success.
6. *Alternatives in Vehicle Utilization.* Decisions relative to the operation of pupil transportation equipment must include a consideration of their impact on the objectives of program service, i.e., operational economy, pupil safety and program efficiency. Additional time in service for transportation equipment should not be prolonged to the extent that safety would be compromised or that excessive expenditures would be required to keep such units operable. By the same token, renovations of equipment that do not provide assurance that such expenditures will offer them a fair

return on their investment should be discouraged. In the final analysis, school officials should fully explore all possible alternatives before committing the funding required to extend the lifetime expectancy of pupil transportation equipment.

7. *National Safety Program Standard* #17. Total compliance with the many provisions of this standard is an absolute necessity if program service is to be upgraded to an acceptable level. Most, if not all, districts can claim credit for some degree of progress but few can boast of total compliance. This, in part, is attributable to the comprehensiveness of its content and the absence of the administrative ability required to make it function.

   The reasons for non-compliance vary from district to district but most appear to result from conflicting legislation, token enforcement authority and deficient budgets. School officials, for example, are powerless to eliminate standees if legislation is enacted to permit them; the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in much the same respect, is reluctant to initiate enforcement procedures when states do not comply; and budgets that are already hardpressed to meet program needs are of little value in offsetting expenditures associated with the compliance effort. This, of course, works an understandable hardship on many districts but such does not minimize the necessity for compliance with those provisions that do not require large monetary investments. Expenditures for the classroom instruction of transported pupils, the maintenance of equipment and the training of school bus drivers usually require little more than changes in staff assignments and should be within the immediate means of most, if not all, school districts.

8. *School Bus Accident Reports.* Data collection is useless if plans have not been developed to use the resulting information effectively. This is especially true with accident reports. A rash of rear end collisions could indicate that drivers are not utilizing signaling devices properly; it could mean that maintenance procedures are inadequate or it could indicate that bus drivers are not discharging driver responsibilities in a responsible manner.

   The data collected should figure prominently in the development of training program content and school bus specifications. Accident frequency, types of occurrences and extent of damage are frequent indicators of accident causes. Professional evaluations of such data are invaluable in combating future occurrences. The wise administrator will make every effort to utilize such data in this manner.

9. *Transportation of the Handicapped.* School districts have little recourse to the mandate set forth in P.L. 94-142. They must provide

improvements in instruction, better qualified classroom teachers, upgraded instructional facilities, more adequately funded programs and safer, more comfortable transportation equipment. In essence, "mainstreaming" is the order of the day when regular facilities are adaptable to the needs of such pupils. There will be a need, however, for special instructors, facilities and equipment in those instances where mainstreaming is not desirable. School officials must be willing to provide such necessities if the needs of these children are to be met in an acceptable manner.

Appendix A

Pre-Service Training Program

National Highway Safety Program Standard 17 recommends that all school bus driver applicants without prior experience in the operation of heavy equipment complete a minimum of 40 hours of pre-service training as a condition for employment in this capacity. Most pupil transportation divisions of the various state departments of education have been aware, for some time, that many districts are not staffed to provide this level of training for their driver personnel and that the practice has resulted in the employment of bus drivers that are not qualified to operate transportation equipment in a safe, economical manner. Many of the smaller school districts, for example, make little, if any, effort to provide driver personnel with instruction in safe riding practices. The two-day inservice period conducted prior to the beginning of the school year is about all the training most of them receive.

Most administrators feel that fully informed drivers are safe drivers and a credit to their school districts. They further believe that every child assigned to a bus is entitled to the best driver the district can employ and that a continuous level of training is essential to a successful job performance. The following training program has been developed to assist local school officials in providing prospective drivers and their substitutes with an acceptable level of training. The hours shown are suggested time frames and may be altered to fit local, state and individual needs.

PROGRAM CONTENT

I. FAMILIARIZING DRIVERS WITH THEIR SCHOOL BUS—3 HOURS

A bus driver should become familiar with all aspects of the vehicle. Each item should be fully explained and the driver should be required

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to demonstrate proficiency in the function of each. Items to be considered include the instrument panel, lighting system (interior and exterior), front and rear suspension assemblies, door controls (front and rear), tire pressures, brakes, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, engine componetry, minor engine repair procedures, etc.

(Allow approximately one hour for review and discussion time.)

II. LOCAL AND STATE BOARD POLICIES—4 HOURS

A. Local Board Policies

Bus drivers are governed by a series of board actions that may, or may not, be incorporated into a policy document. Each bus driver should become familiar with such actions of the board and be governed accordingly. Such policy should include procedures on handling and, hopefully, resolving "on-board" disciplinary problems, the location of bus stops, enroute operational procedures, rules on driver dress and conduct, the care and maintenance of equipment, emergency evacuation procedures, completion of required records and reports, and other rules relative to the day-to-day operation of the assigned vehicle.

B. State Board Policies

Several state board policies are applicable to the school bus driver. The driver should be familiar with each. Experience requirements for employment, the type of license required, the extent and frequency of medical examinations, attendance requirements for state board provided inservice training clinics and the use of seat belts should be carefully reviewed.
(Allow approximately one hour for review and discussion time.)

III. HANDLING DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS—4 HOURS

Discipline may be handled in a variety of ways. The most successful methods rely upon the written report because of the accessibility of such documented evidence. Such reports may be the result of a sophisticated effort or merely a form locally prepared that adequately, but succinctly, describes the behavioral problem encountered. In any case, disciplinary procedures should be carefully explained and a copy of such should be provided every driver assigned a bus route or employed on a substitute basis. The session should conclude with a review of the chain of command within the pupil transportation operation.
(Allow approximately one hour for review and discussion.)

IV. DEFENSIVE DRIVING—8 HOURS

Most progressive school districts offer driver education at the high school level. Such training is important whether the recipient of such early training ever becomes interested in applying for employment as a school bus driver. Those that have completed such a course enter the driver ranks with a decided advantage over those that have not completed a high school level course in driver education. The need for defensive driver training cannot be over emphasized. The wise school administrator will expose drivers to the latest techniques in defensive driving at every opportunity. Knowing what to do, how to do and when to do is extremely important. Numerous professionally prepared workbooks and tests are available. Other locally developed materials can be used to defray instructional expenses. Such tests are adaptable for "open book" type exams.
(Allow approximately 2 hours for review, discussion and evaluation.)

V. EMERGENCY FIRST AID—3 HOURS

The customary use of first aid materials can be supplemented by the use of Emergency Medical Technicians, county public health doctors and nurses, and the American Red Cross medical representatives. Attention should be given to the more common type injuries experienced by transported pupils (cuts, bruises, scratches, etc.) with special emphasis reserved for bleeding and artificial respiration.
(Allow approximately one hour for review and discussion.)

VI. BUS EVACUATION DRILLS—2 HOURS

Emphasis should be placed upon the escape route plans developed for, and approved by, the local board of education. Each driver should be provided with "evacuation diagrams" and instructed in the art of dealing with frightened pupils in a variety of accident situations.
(Allow approximately one hour for review and discussion.)

VII. HANDLING THE SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENT—2 HOURS

The driver should be provided with information on the following aspects of the accident; the care of pupil passengers; the care of the transporting unit; the placement of emergency warning devices; the acquisition of essential data (other drivers identification; license number, name, address, place of employment, etc.); the names of witnesses, if any; and completion of required state and local accident reports.
(Allow approximately one hour for review, discussion and evaluation.)

VIII. BEHIND THE WHEEL INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES—5 HOURS

Newly employed drivers, as well as experienced drivers, should ride the bus as observers in the presence of the training instructor before taking their turn behind the wheel. During this phase of training, attention should be given to the care of the bus, stopping and starting procedures, the use of warning stop lights and the stop signal arm, the placement of emergency road warning devices, the handling of on-board disciplinary problems, accident reporting practices and a complete review of all on-board and off-board operational practices.
(Allow approximately one hour for review, discussion and evaluation.)

Appendix B

Pupil Bus Behavior Report

Bus No. _____ Date _____

A.M. _____ P.M. _____

Pupil's Name _____

REASON FOR REFERRAL: REPORT# 1 2 3

_____ Eating or drinking on bus
_____ Throwing or shooting object on bus (explain below)
_____ Smoking or lighting matches
_____ Fighting on bus (explain below)
_____ Head, arms or legs out of the window
_____ Damage to bus (explain below)
_____ Using profane or foul language on bus (explain below)
_____ Will not remain in assigned seat (explain below)
_____ Refuse to follow instruction (explain below)
_____ Consistent tardiness to bus stop
_____ Horseplay (explain below)
_____ Weapons (explain below)
_____ Other (be specific)

PLEASE GIVE DETAILS _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Parent Contact _____

Phone Call _____ Note to Parent _____

Driver's Signature _____

School _____ Date Reported _____

(To be completed by the school and return yellow copy to driver)

ACTION TAKEN: _____

_____

_____

Date _____

Authorized Signature _____

White & Yellow Copies—Principal Pink Copy—Driver

Source: Charles County Board of Education, La Plata, Maryland

Appendix C
Daily Pre-Trip Inspection Form

Driver: _____ Date: _____

_____ Gas Cap

Underhood—right side

_____ Battery
_____ Radiator
_____ Belts
_____ Leaks
_____ Wires
_____ Hoses
_____ Air Filter
_____ Oil

Underhood—Left Side

_____ Wires
_____ Leaks
_____ Hoses
_____ Brake Fluid—Master Cylinder

Starting Bus

_____ Neutral
_____ Without Racing
_____ Check Gauges
_____ Parking Brake Set

Inside Circle Check

_____ Left Turn Signal
_____ Headlights (high beam)
_____ Red Flashing Lights
_____ Clearance Lights
_____ Windshield Wipers
_____ Washer (if any)
_____ Heaters
_____ Defrosters
_____ Dome Lights

Outside—Circle Check

_____ Step Well Light
_____ Right Front Tire
_____ Inside Left Front Tire
_____ Clearance Lights
_____ Red Flashing Lights
_____ Headlights—High Beam
_____ Left Turn Signal (front)
_____ Left Front Tire
_____ Inside Right Front Tire
_____ Condition of Bus Body & Windows
_____ Left Dual Rear Tires & In Between Tires
_____ Inside Right Dual Rear Tires
_____ Under Bus for Leaks
_____ Gas
_____ Oil
_____ Water
_____ Exhaust
_____ Mud Flaps (left)
_____ Clearance Lights
_____ Red Flashing Lights
_____ Left Turn Signal (back)
_____ Emergency Door Outside
_____ Tail Lights
_____ Tail Pipe
_____ Mud Flaps (right)
_____ Right Rear Dual Tires—In Between Tires
_____ Inside Left Rear Dual Tires
_____ Condition of Bus Body & Windows
_____ Deactivate Lights Completely Checked
_____ Turn on Lights to be Checked-right side
_____ Right Turn Signal (front)
_____ Headlights Low Beams

_____ Right Turn Signal (back)
_____ Deactivate All Lights
_____ Turn Off Ignition—Turn On Key
_____ Check Brake Lights
_____ Check Back-up Lights
_____ Check Hazard Lights
_____ Restart Bus if Cold Weather to Warm Up

Emergency Equipment

_____ Fire Extinguisher
_____ Axe—Optional
_____ First-Aid Kit
_____ Fusees
_____ Reflectors
_____ Service Door
_____ Condition of Inside of Bus
_____ Seats for Damage
_____ Emergency Door Inside
_____ Stop Arm—if Equipped

Peparing To Drive

_____ Adjust Seat
_____ Adjust Seat Belt
_____ Mirrors—West Coast, Rearview, Convex, Fender Convex, especially Crossover Horn
_____ Check Hand Brake
_____ Check Food Brake
_____ Signal Intent to Pull Out

Source: Charles County Board of Education, La Plata, Maryland.

Appendix D

UNIFORM SCHOOL BUS ACCIDENT* REPORT FORM

Local School System _____ Accident No. _____

Bus Driver Name _____ Driver License No. _____

Police Report No. (If Known) _____ Citation Issued? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Date of Accident _____ Day _____ Time _____ AM PM (Circle)

Bus Owner Name and Address _____

Bus Body Make _____ Bus Chassis Make _____ Model Year _____

PART I—SCHOOL BUS PHYSICALLY INVOLVED

1. Type of Accident (see def.) (enter only one response):
   - 11 ☐ Between motor vehicles
   - 12 ☐ Noncollision
   - 13 ☐ Pedestrian
   - 06 ☐ Fixed object (complete Ques. 2)
   - 07 ☐ Pedalcycle
   - 08 ☐ Railroad train
   - 09 ☐ Other collision (animal, animal-drawn vehicle, streetcar)

2. Complete if Fixed Object Accident (enter only one response, that which caused most damage):
   - 11 ☐ Embankment
   - 04 ☐ Sign
   - 17 ☐ Fence
   - 10 ☐ Curb or wall
   - 14 ☐ Utility pole
   - 15 ☐ Guardrail
   - 16 ☐ Median barrier
   - 11 ☐ Culvert or headwall
   - 13 ☐ Tree
   - 18 ☐ Bridgerail
   - 19 ☐ Fire hydrant
   - 12 ☐ Other _____ (specify)

3. Did accident result in? (enter only one response)
   - 01 ☐ Fatality
   - 02 ☐ Incapacitating injury (serious)
   - 03 ☐ Nonincapacitating injury (moderate)
   - 04 ☐ Possible injury (minor)

   Property damage only. If property damage occurred, was it?:

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7. First Point of Impact (enter only one response in box):

Enter _____

8. Contributing Circumstances (enter as many responses as applicable):

Driver Action	Bus Driver Action		Other Vehicle Driver Action	
Speed	01		12	
Right of way—failed to yield	02		13	
Passed stop sign	03		14	

05 ☐ More than $500.000 06 ☐ Less than $500.00

4. Number injured: (see PART III)

5. Manner of Collision Between Vehicles or Objects:

01 ☐ Angle
02 ☐ Head-on
03 ☐ Rear-end
04 ☐ Other

6. Bus Direction Analysis (enter only one response for 01 thru 28):

Collision with Pedestrian

Intersection (see def.)	Nonintersection
01 ☐ Bus going straight	06 ☐ Bus going straight
02 ☐ Bus turning right	07 ☐ Bus turning right
03 ☐ Bus turning left	08 ☐ Bus turning left
04 ☐ Bus backing	09 ☐ Bus backing
05 ☐ Other action_____ specify	10 ☐ Other action_____ specify

Collision with Other Vehicle

Intersection	Nonintersection
11 ☐ Entering at angle, both moving	15 ☐ Same direction, both moving
12 ☐ Entering same direction, both moving	16 ☐ Opposite direction, both moving
13 ☐ Entering opposite direction, both moving	17 ☐ One vehicle stopped
14 ☐ Other action_____ specify	18 ☐ Other action_____ specify

All Other Collisions

Intersection	Nonintersection
19 ☐ Fixed object	22 ☐ Fixed object
20 ☐ Other road vehicle, train, pedalcycle	23 ☐ Other road vehicle, train, pedalcycle
21 ☐ Other object, animal	24 ☐ Other object, animal

Noncollision

Intersection	Nonintersection
25 ☐ Overturn	27 ☐ Overturn
26 ☐ Other noncollision	28 ☐ Other noncollision

Disregarded signal	04		15	
Drove left of center	05		16	
Improper overtaking	06		17	
Made improper turn	07		18	
Followed too closely	08		19	
Backing	09		20	
Sudden movement	10		21	
No improper action	11		22	

Roadway

23 ☐ Defective surface (e.g., potholes)
24 ☐ Slippery
25 ☐ Inoperative traffic signal
26 ☐ View obstructed by object (i.e., tree, fence, shrubbery, etc.)

Vehicle Defect

27 ☐ Tires
28 ☐ Brakes
29 ☐ Lights
30 ☐ Steering
31 ☐ No Vehicle Defect

32 ☐ Other_____ specify

9. Total Number of Lanes on Roadway ☐

10. Posted Speed Limit ☐

11. Approximate Speed of the Bus ☐

12. Age of the School Bus Driver ☐

13. Driver Sex 01 ☐ M 02 ☐ F

14. Driver's Experience Driving School Bus:

01 ☐ Less than 6 months
02 ☐ 1 year or less
03 ☐ 1-2 years
04 ☐ 2-5 years
05 ☐ 5-10 years
06 ☐ Over 10 years

15. In the last three years, how many school bus accidents has the driver had? ☐

*An ACCIDENT is defined as any incident, occurrence, or action involving a driver of a school bus operated by or under contract to a local school system which results in an injury, fatality, or damage to any motor vehicle or property. Excluded are commercial buses which are not licensed as school buses.

16. Did the driver complete preservice training as prescribed in COMAR 13A.06.07.09A?
01 ☐ Yes 02 ☐ No

17. Did the driver complete inservice training in the past 12 months as prescribed in COMAR 13A.06.07.09B?
01 ☐ Yes 02 ☐ No

18. Was bus driver's lap belt in use when the accident occurred?
01 ☐ Yes 02 ☐ No

19. Type of School Bus: (see definitions)
01 ☐ Type A 03 ☐ Type C 05 ☐ Other
02 ☐ Type B 04 ☐ Type D

20. Total Number of Passengers on Bus (excluding driver) ☐

21. Bus Rated Seating Capacity ☐

22. School Bus Use at Time of Accident:
01 ☐ Regular Route 03 ☐ Special Education Use
02 ☐ Field Activity Trip (School related use) 04 ☐ Other Use

23. Condition of Road at Time of Accident (enter as many responses as applicable):
01 ☐ Dry 03 ☐ Under Repair 05 ☐ Holes or ruts 07 ☐ Wet
02 ☐ Icy 04 ☐ Snow packed 06 ☐ Muddy 08 ☐ Other_____ specify

24. Light Condition (enter only one response):
01 ☐ Dawn 04 ☐ Dark, artificially illuminated
02 ☐ Daylight 05 ☐ Dark, not artificially illuminated
03 ☐ Dusk

25. Weather Condition (enter only one response):
01 ☐ Clear 03 ☐ Raining 05 ☐ Snowing 07 ☐ Smog/smoke
02 ☐ Sleeting 04 ☐ Fog 06 ☐ Dust 08 ☐ Other_____ specify

PART II—LOADING/UNLOADING ZONE ACCIDENTS (see definitions)

1. At the time of the accident, where was the bus? (enter only one response)

Complete the following diagram showing direction and positions of vehicles involved, designating clearly the point of contact. (If this diagram will not serve for the accident in question, attach separate sheet with illustration.)

PART III—INJURY TALLY SHEET
SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION-RELATED PERSONNEL

	Age	On Board Bus							
		Killed			Injured				
					Serious		Moderate	Minor	
		M	F		All		All	All	
Pupils	Under 5	01	02		03		04	05	
	5	11	12		13		14	15	
	6	21	22		23		24	25	
	7	31	32		33		34	35	
	8	41	42		43		44	45	
	9	51	52		53		54	55	
	10	61	62		63		64	65	
	11	71	72		73		74	75	
	12	81	82		83		84	85	
	13	91	92		93		94	95	
	14	101	102		103		104	105	
	15	111	112		113		114	115	
	16	121	122		123		124	125	
	17	131	132		133		134	135	
	18	141	142		143		144	145	
	Over 18	151	152		153		154	155	
	Driver	161	162		163		164	165	
	Others	171	172		173		174	175	

01 ☐ Approaching the zone
03 ☐ Leaving the zone
05 ☐ Stopped in the zone
06 ☐ Not in sight

2. Was the pupil(s)? 01 ☐ Hit by bus 02 ☐ Hit by other vehicle

3. Number injured: (see PART III)

4. Location of injured pupil(s):
01 ☐ On side of road
03 ☐ In roadway
02 ☐ On sidewalk
04 ☐ Other _____ (specify)

Please describe behavior of pupil(s) in loading zone in "Description of Accident."

Description of Accident: _____

Totals	181	182	183	184	185

Age	Off Bus Loading/Unloading Zone								
	Killed			Injured					
				Serious		Moderate		Minor	
	M		F	All		All		All	
Pupils Under 5	06		07	08		09		10	
5	16		17	18		19		20	
6	26		27	28		29		30	
7	36		37	38		39		40	
8	46		47	48		49		50	
9	56		57	58		59		60	
10	66		67	68		69		70	
11	76		77	78		79		80	
12	86		87	88		89		90	
13	96		97	98		99		100	
14	106		107	108		109		110	
15	116		117	118		119		120	
16	126		127	128		129		130	
17	136		137	138		139		140	
18	146		147	148		149		150	
Over 18	156		157	158		159		160	
Driver	166		167	168		169		170	
Others	176		177	178		179		180	
Totals	186		187	188		189		190	

NAME OF PERSON COMPLETING REPORT _____
Print or Type Date

SUPERVISOR OF TRANSPORTATION _____
Signature Date

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: Submit one copy of this report for each accident occurring during the fiscal year (July 1 through June 30). Each report must be signed and dated by the Supervisor of Transportation. All reports are to be submitted by JULY 15 to the Chief, Pupil Transportation Section, Maryland State Department of Education.

Source: Maryland Department of Education

Appendix E

SCHOOL BUS RIDER'S GUIDE

Time for School

Don't miss the bus. Give yourself plenty of time to reach the bus stop. Leave your home about five minutes early. Walk, don't run.

Walk Safely. Stay on the sidewalks or, if there are none, walk on the left side of the road facing oncoming traffic. Cross streets only at intersections or crosswalks.

Waiting

No horseplay. Running around and playing is okay for the playground, but not the bus stop. Stay out of the street while you wait for the bus. Traffic often is heavy in the morning, and you could be hit by a car or cause an accident if a car is forced to stop quickly for you.

Respect property. Don't run across people's yards, climb their trees, or go into their garages. Stay at the bus stop.

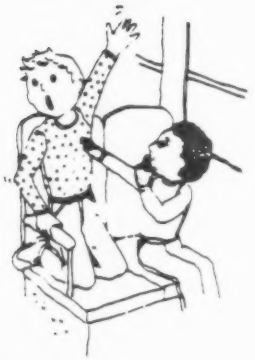
Sshh! People in the neighborhood may still be sleeping when you leave for school, so try to keep down the noise. (*You* don't like to be disturbed when you are tired, so be considerate. Let others sleep.)

Getting Off

Be organized. Be ready to leave when you reach your stop. Don't keep the driver and the other bus riders waiting while you gather up your books and other belongings.

Stay put. Wait until the bus has stopped completely before you get up from your seat. And always let the people in the front of the bus get off first.

Don't push. You'll get out faster if no one shoves or pushes. Also, chances are better no one will trip and fall, causing delays.



The Ride

Be quiet. The driver needs your help and he may have trouble concentrating if there is too much commotion in the bus. Stay in your seat.

Keep the aisles clear. Nothing . . . books, bags, legs, arms or bodies . . . should block the aisle. Do not stand in the aisle. If the driver is forced to make a quick stop, you could be thrown around and hurt yourself and others.

Everything inside. If the driver lets you open the windows, keep your hands, arms and head inside. Don't throw things out of the windows.

No pets allowed. Animals, including pets on leashes, in boxes or in cages are not allowed on the bus.

Share your seat. Don't save a spot for a friend, but keep the seat open for anyone who wants to sit down. (You'll have plenty of time to talk to your friends once you get to school.)

Source: Minnesota Department of Public Safety

Leave immediately. After you get off the bus, leave the area quickly so that you are out of the way of other buses bringing more children to school.

Stay clear. Keep away from the side of the bus. If you must cross the street, cross in front of the bus. But, wait for an "all clear" signal from the driver before you leave the curb. Look both ways before crossing.

It's Up To You

If an emergency situation arises, you can help by staying calm. Listen to the driver and follow instructions. Help the driver by getting the smaller children off safely.

Appendix F
Application for Current School Bus Driver/Aide

For OFFICE USE Only

Reg. or Sub Driver _____

Contractor _____

C & D Requested _____

C & D Received _____

Date Terminated _____

AIDE
or (Please circle one)
DRIVER

Date of Application _____

Social Security No. _____

PLEASE ANSWER EVERY QUESTION COMPLETELY

Mr.
Mrs.
1. Miss _____ 2. Birthdate _____
First Middle Last
Name—as it appears on Driver's License

3. Phone No. _____

4. Address _____
(Town) (Zip Code)

5. Exact Location of Home _____
Example: Subdivision, Road, etc.

6. Do you have any physical defects? Yes ( ) No ( ) If *Yes*, please list: _____

_____

7. Are you on any medication prescribed by a physician? Yes ( ) No ( )

8. Maryland Driver's License Number _____ Class _____

9. Experience Driving School Bus _____ Months _____ Years

10. Have you ever been charged with violation of the Motor Vehicle Code of Maryland in the last 3 years? _____ If so, please list dates and offenses _____ Were you found guilty? _____

Signature _____

7-83 Date _____

NOTICE

All persons applying for position as a school bus driver, or bus driver aide with the Charles County Board of Education, will have their driving and criminal records checked by the Motor Vehicle Administration, State Police and the Charles County Sheriff's Deparment.

Date _____ Signature of Applicant _____

Name as it appears on driver's license _____

Driver's License Number _____

Date of birth _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

	CRIMINAL RECORD	
Date Arrested	**Offense**	**Disposition**

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF CHARLES COUNTY
LA PLATA, MARYLAND 20646

Rules & Regulations Governing the Employment of Charles County School Bus Drivers and Aides.

I — **Pre-Instructional Requirements**

1. Submit an application to the Transportation Office.
2. Sign the Release Form for a Criminal & Driving record check by the Charles County Sheriff's Department, Motor Vehicle Administration and the State Police.
3. Be finger printed. These prints are sent to the F.B.I. The cost to you is $14.30, payable when you submit your application. After you are trained and remain certified for three months, this sum will be reimbursed to you.
4. Have an interview with a Charles County School Bus Driver Instructor.
5. Take the acuity tests as prescribed by Bylaw 13.05.08.

II — **Instructional Requirements**

1. Holders of less than a "C" license:
   a. Attend pre-sevice classroom instruction
   b. Obtain a Class "C" learner's permit
   c. Receive 10 or more hours of behind-the-wheel instruction
2. Holders of an "A", "B" or "C" Class license that have not driven a school bus in Charles County.
   a. Attend pre-service classroom training
   b. Receive 3 or more hours behind-the-wheel training, depending on individual's driving ability

Experienced school bus drivers whose names have been deleted from the Motor Administration roster for more than 12 months must meet all pre-service requirements.

All school bus drivers must have a physical and Tuberculin test. Both copies of the physical and tuberculin test must be in the Transportation Office before the individual can drive a school bus with passengers for the Charles County Schools.

III — Inservice Training

All school bus drivers and aides are required to attend in-service training every year.

Drivers—at least 6 hours
Aides—2 hours

AIDES

All new aide applicants shall be required to have pre-service training and have a TB test. The results of the TB test must be in the Transportation Office prior to being assigned to a bus.

Source: Charles County, Maryland, Board of Education

Appendix G

Physical Examination of Driver

☐ New Certification
☐ Recertification

SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE SIDE

Name _____ Birth _____ Age _____
(Please Print) (Last) (First) (Middle) (Month, Day, Year)

Address _____ _____
(Number and Street) (City) (State) (Zip) (Soc. Sec. No.)

HEALTH HISTORY

Yes	No		Yes	No		Yes	No	
☐	☐	Head or spinal injuries	☐	☐	Gastrointestinal Ulcer	☐	☐	Seizures, fits, convulsions, or fainting
☐	☐	Cardiovascular disease	☐	☐	Nervous Stomach	☐	☐	Extensive confinement by illness or injury
☐	☐	Tuberculosis	☐	☐	Rheumatic Fever	☐	☐	Suffering from any other disease
☐	☐	Syphilis	☐	☐	Asthma	☐	☐	Permanent defect from illness, disease or injury
☐	☐	Gonorrhea	☐	☐	Kidney disease	☐	☐	Psychiatric disorder
☐	☐	Diabetes	☐	☐	Muscular Disease	☐	☐	Any other nervous disorder

If answer to any of the above is yes, explain: _____

_____

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

General Appearance and Development: Good _____ Fair _____ Poor _____ Height _____ Weight _____

Vision: For distance: (Without corrective lenses Right 20/_____ Left 20/_____ ☐ Spectacles are worn
(With corrective lenses if worn) Right 20/_____ Left 20/_____ ☐ Contact lenses are worn

Evidence of disease or injury: Right _____ Left _____

Color Vision _____ Horizontal field of vision: Right _____ Left _____

Hearing: Right ear _____ Left ear _____

Disease or injury _____

Audiometric test: *(Complete only if audiometer is used to test hearing)* Decibel loss at 500 Hz _____, at 1,000 Hz _____, at 2,000 Hz _____

Throat: _____

Thorax: Heart _____

If organic disease is present, is it fully compensated? _____

Blood pressure: Systolic _____ Diastolic _____

Pulse: Before exercise _____ Immediately after exercise _____

Lungs _____

Abdomen: Scars _____ Abnormal masses _____ Tenderness _____

Hernia: Yes _____ No _____ If so, where? _____ Is truss worn? _____

Gastrointestinal: Ulceration or other disease: Yes _____ No _____

Genito-Urinary: Scars _____ Urethral discharge _____

Reflexes: Rhomberg _____

Pupillary _____ Light R _____ L _____ Accommodation R _____ L _____

Knee jerks: Right: Normal _____ Increased _____ Absent _____

Left: Normal _____ Increased _____ Absent _____

Remarks: _____

Extremities: Upper _____ Lower _____ Spine _____

Laboratory and Other Special Findings: Urine: Spec. Gr. _____ Alb. _____ Sugar _____

Other Laboratory Date (Serology, etc.) _____

Radiological Data _____

Electrocardiograph _____

General Comments: _____

(Date of Examination) (Address of Examining Doctor)

(Name of Examining Doctor (Print)) (Signature of Examining Doctor)

NOTE: This section to be completed *only* when visual test is conducted by a licensed optometrist.

(Date of Examination) (Address of Optometrist)

(Name of Optometrist (Print)) (Signature of Optometrist)

MEDICAL EXAMINER'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that I have examined _____ (Driver's Name (Print)) in accordance with the Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (49 C.F.R. 391.41-391.49) and with the knowledge of his duties, I find him qualified under the regulations.

☐ Qualified only when wearing corrective lenses. ☐ Qualified only when wearing a hearing aid.

A completed examination form for this person is on file in my office at _____ (Address)

(Date of examination) (Name of examining doctor (Print)) (Signature of examining doctor)

(Signature of driver) (Address of driver)